



Rose Walker

With original photography by John Batten

Art in Spain and Portugal from the Romans to the Early Middle Ages

Routes and Myths

Amsterdam
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river and had several forks along the way, and as we bumped our way upwards I was convinced we were completely lost: but just as I began to complain about the foolishness of not waiting until the mist had lifted we cleared a rocky escarpment to find ourselves almost inside the ruined basilica. He claims this instinct is a countryman's thing, and I cannot disagree. He has also taken thousands of photographs in often challenging circumstances.

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Conventions

Dates and Names

Dates are given as BC or AD in accordance with the house style. Spanish manuscripts and inscriptions during much of this period use the Spanish era, which begins with the year 38 BC, but they have been converted here.

I have anglicised proper names for people and places where the result is more familiar. Otherwise I have used modern Spanish or Portuguese names. Latin equivalents are given in brackets where this may be helpful to readers following up references. Arabic names have been transcribed but with a restricted number of symbols.

Abbreviations

<i>AEA</i>	<i>Archivo Español de Arte</i>
<i>AEspA</i>	<i>Archivo Español de Arqueología</i>
<i>AEspAArq</i>	<i>Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología</i>
<i>AAAIS</i>	<i>Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain</i> . 1992. ed. by Jerrilynn Dodds (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art)
<i>AMS</i>	<i>The Art of Medieval Spain a.d. 500-1200</i> , 1993. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art)
<i>ASMOSIA</i>	<i>Interdisciplinary Studies on Ancient Stone: Proceedings of the IX Association for the Study of Marble & Other Stones in Antiquity Conference (Tarragona 2009)</i> . 2012. ed. by Anna Gutiérrez García-M and others (Tarragona: Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica)
<i>BAR</i>	British Archaeological Reports
<i>CCM</i>	<i>Cahiers de Civilization Médiévale</i>
<i>CEC</i>	<i>Cataluña en la época Carolingia: arte y cultura antes del románico (siglos IX y X)</i> . 1999. ed. by Jordi Camps (Barcelona: MNAC)
<i>CNRS</i>	Centre national de la recherche scientifique
<i>CSIC</i>	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas
<i>CSMC</i>	<i>Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel Cuxa</i>
<i>MNAC</i>	Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya
<i>PatSM</i>	<i>Patrimonio artístico de Galicia y otros estudios: Homenaje al Prof. Dr. Serafín Moralejo Álvarez</i> . 2004. 3 vols., ed. by Ángela Franco Mata (Santiago de Compostela: Xunta de Galicia)
<i>SRC</i>	<i>El sarcófago romano. Contribuciones al estudio de su tipología, iconografía y centros de producción</i> , ed. by José Miguel Noguera Celdrán and Elena Conde Guerri (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia)

Introduction

“History in Spain lies like a palimpsest, layer upon layer ...”
Rose Macaulay, Fabled Shore: From the Pyrenees to Portugal

The Iberian peninsula is replete with myths. In the north, pilgrims crossed remote mountains, and followed a sacred topography populated by pious hermits and holy bishops. Prodigious monuments bore witness to a glorious Visigothic past, which inspired a tiny band of crusaders to fight for repossession of the land for over half a millennium. In the northeast, Catalonia sat apart, linked politically and artistically to Europe. A barren no-man's land occupied the centre until the arrival of Christian settlers. In the south, al-Andalus was a paradise of luxury and tolerance, where Christians, Jews, and Muslims lived together in harmony (*convivencia*). Like most myths, these narratives contain a few grains of truth, but they have also obscured much of the literature on Spanish and Portuguese art.¹ For those who work on Romanesque art the language of the pilgrimage road and of the *reconquista* remains an issue, despite repeated efforts to employ new approaches and clear rejection of the methodologies of early-twentieth-century historiography. Likewise historians and art historians have proposed convincing alternatives to *convivencia*. Building on such work, this book aims to provide a revisionist survey of Spanish and Portuguese art and architecture from the Roman conquest to the late eleventh century. It cannot, and is not intended to, replace earlier surveys that describe all aspects of buildings and objects in great detail. Instead it brings together

information from diverse sources – documentary, archaeological, and art historical – to present new narrative contexts and to highlight some important case studies. As its main subject is connections, and above all exchange across the supposed north-south divide, this book uses a cartographic framework. For generations lines on maps have bedevilled study of this art and architecture.² They have infiltrated the popular imagination and have come to dominate the ways that most people think about medieval Spain and Portugal. One impetus behind this book is to diminish the power of these lines by setting them within a wider and deeper network. The pilgrimage-road map is an image of influence. It comprises four ‘pilgrimage’ roads that come down through France – and it is always down and not up – to converge south of the Pyrenees at Puente la Reina. From there, a single road winds its way horizontally east-west across the north of the peninsula until it reaches its destination, Santiago de Compostela. These familiar linear marks bring with them the intellectual debates and assumptions of the last hundred years. They embody the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century idea that French artistic invention repeatedly marched down the roads and into Spain where it was received. This is perhaps best summed up by Emile Mâle's claim that ‘civilisation came into Spain along the Way of Saint James’, an idea that was influenced

1 For the myths of Spanish Romanesque historiography, see Castiñeiras, 2008b, 86-107.

2 Ingold, 2007, 72-103.

by Bédier's work on medieval literature.³ In the 1920s the pioneering art historian Arthur Kingsley Porter vigorously opposed the direction of Mâle's model.⁴ Yet he also believed in the pilgrimage roads as routes of transmission and that 'medieval sculptural influences, like medieval poetry, knew no nationality borders but were fluid like the pilgrims who travelled to Santiago de Compostela'. The image that this conjures of the medieval artist wandering the road like a troubadour continues to hide in the assumptions of more recent research, and 'pilgrimage-road' sculpture remains a much-used phrase. The arguments of Mâle and Porter crystallized into the 'Spain or Toulouse' debate on the origins of Romanesque sculpture, which still troubles the work of many later scholars, for all that they declare that they no longer believe in this opposition.

The *reconquista* map is an image of division. It represents an advancing border as the 'reconquest' is seen to gather pace in a uniform and progressive manner that moves southwards down the peninsula. The areas labelled 'Christian' on the maps become incrementally larger, whilst those marked 'Muslim' shrink. The first in a series of maps typically draws a thin line along the north of the Spanish peninsula to indicate territory left to the surviving Visigoths and Hispano-Romans when the Arabs and Berbers invaded in 711. A second map usually demarcates the area north of the Duero river to show progress made by the Christians in reclaiming land by the mid-tenth century. The land to the south of the river Duero, but north of the Muslim caliphate of al-Andalus, is often shaded grey to suggest a buffer zone and an area of depopulation. Maps that show the position in the late eleventh century, after King Alfonso VI's conquest of Toledo in

1085, absorb most of that buffer zone into the kingdom of León and Castile. The divisions on these maps reflect some historical realities, identifying land claimed at specific times and strategic sites when they changed hands. However, lines cannot adequately reflect the cultural, economic, and political links between the kingdoms. They serve only to reinforce the supposed bipolarity between Christians and Muslims and to establish religious, or confessional, difference as the only one that matters. Scholars in the field have argued for many years that religious difference was not necessarily the most important identifier at the time, at least not before the twelfth century. They have shown how alliances were forged between Muslim and Christian; that Christian fought Christian, and Muslim fought Muslim, just as often as they opposed one another on the basis of faith. It has become clear that diplomacy, trade, and warfare operated along very different routes with little regard for official boundaries even where those existed. Frontier studies have helped to address these issues but have also perpetuated the dividing line in the very act of challenging it. All too often their models derive from studies of frontiers in the 'wild west' of America that sit strangely alongside the historical realities of medieval Spain. In any event scholars' nuanced arguments have so far failed to re-draw the delimited categories of Muslim and Christian that continue to be embodied in these maps. One impetus behind this book was to find a way to diminish the power of those cartographic images. To some extent that has been done by providing a richer, more layered, geographic and historical framework for the buildings and their contents, but this cannot counter the more memorable lines.

In approaching this challenge I looked for a physical and intellectual topography that would have the visual immediacy of the pilgrimage and *reconquista* maps but would

3 Mâle, 1978, 302; Bédier, 1908-12.

4 Porter, 1924, 3-25.

also open out the full range of possibilities for artistic exchange across the peninsula. I chose the structure of the Roman roads of Hispania. The roads criss-cross the peninsula, working with the coast and with the major rivers to provide a historically authentic way of linking the regions without denying their distinctive identities. I am aware that the choice of a road system, which can be seen as a marker of Roman imperialism, is potentially difficult because of its nationalist associations in recent Spanish and Portuguese history. On the other hand, it is important to note that there is considerable current interest in the Roman heritage that attempts to set aside those ahistorical associations. Nor were the Romans writing on a blank sheet. Phoenicians, Greeks, and Celtiberians had colonised the land long before the Roman conquest and many of the Roman roads used routes previously established, but the Romans consolidated them, improved them, and recorded them. The roads that run through the Spanish and Portuguese landscape interact with its geography and geology to form a range of topographies – sacred, economic, and political – which are important at every stage in this study.⁵ The schema also preserves a north-south view of communication, one that is not cut off by boundary lines separating Christians and Muslims. The network of Roman roads also provided a framework for the field trips that made this book possible, as they followed each of the Roman roads. Despite the neglect that the roads suffered during certain periods, the routes continued to be the main arteries of communication even in difficult times, and modern tarmac roads tend to run close to the routes of these ancient tracks. This first-hand experience of the landscape highlighted the importance of the juxtaposition

of sites, or the distance between them, their position in the landscape, and the relationship to mountains, water, quarries, and other resources. Following the roads also imposed a discipline that lessened the danger of over-privileging monuments that have been at the centre of long-standing art historical debates. It also reduced the risk of overlooking sites or objects omitted from, or marginalised by, those debates. Where major sites were located off the roads these were still included, with a special note of any remote locations. Throughout the period, wealth, whether gained as tribute, as booty through raiding, through ransom payments, through taxes on land or trade, or in the form of diplomatic gifts, moved around this nexus of roads. The availability of such wealth, sustained or sporadic, may often have been the determining factor in the decision to build or to craft a work of art. The form of the wealth, gold, silver or other precious materials – or perhaps in the form of skilled labour – may have determined the result.

There are further advantages to starting with the Roman period and working through the vertical layers to the early Romanesque. All the cultures that developed in Spain after the Roman period were accretive. People continued to repair, re-use, and re-invent Roman buildings and infrastructure at different dates and even at different locations. Some of the most useful examples, and often the hardest to assess, occur where architectural or decorative elements have been extracted from earlier layers and reused in later contexts. Some were plundered for mainly pragmatic reasons; others gained more complex meanings when they were incorporated as *spolia* in later structures. This process persisted and indeed renewed itself, as ninth- and tenth-century masons and sculptors in the north and the south of the peninsula looked back to works produced not only in antiquity but also in the

5 For the geography of art, see Kaufmann, 2004, 17-104.

intervening periods. Ultimately they shared an artistic vocabulary and varied it in ways that reflected complex political and social realities. Awareness of, and admiration for, the art of Byzantium informed much of the production. In the north some objects were even crafted to look like *spolia*, creating a mesmerizing mix of preserved pieces and archaizing new carvings, whilst at the same time interacting with developments in al-Andalus. Although it could be said that continuity in the sense of artistic language and sometimes materials is an important element in this book, it is not intended to imply homogeneity of production at any period or geographical location, and, just as importantly, does not suggest continuity of expertise. As some Spanish scholars have emphasized, it was not possible to revive Roman or late antique techniques merely by studying their surviving results. The artisans who appear to have done this most likely brought the expertise from al-Andalus, where it had been largely imported and fostered.

None of this is separable from the people who inhabited, visited, or controlled these places. Their interaction with the specific physical environment created a strong sense of place for each site. Their selection of location moulded the landscape. The terrain and the locally available stone and men to work it often determined the art and architecture that was created. In other notable cases some of the materials or the artists were very likely imported. Sometimes these importations had far-reaching effects, but others apparently remained one-off phenomena. Although individuals, families, and communities often developed their identities within a site, town, or region, it is important not to underestimate the extent to which people travelled throughout the periods under consideration, regardless of the effort and physical danger sometimes involved. A wide range of social supra-geographical networks overlaid

the everyday routes of communication across the peninsula, including those of the now elusive Jewish communities. Some are visible because they related to the identities of institutions, often ecclesiastical or monastic, whilst others drew on less predictable personal connections. The latter can occasionally illuminate otherwise distant and inexplicable parallels, both within and beyond the peninsula.

At every stage in this study the status of the artists, their freedom of movement, and their likely training will be born in mind before any consideration of their religious affiliation. Very little is known about the organisation of labour between the end of the Roman Empire and the late Middle Ages. Even so there is no doubt that slavery played a role, and in Córdoba the caliph owned slaves who were highly accomplished ivory carvers.⁶ Unfree men in the caliphate could hold important positions, and ivory and silk were high status materials. Family workshops that used less precious materials may not have been under the same kind of caliphal control and could trade on their own behalf, albeit within some kind of regulatory framework. There is also evidence for slaves at the Christian royal courts and in monasteries, although it is less clear how many were high-level craftsmen.⁷ As elsewhere in Europe, documentary evidence for the employment of craftsmen, contracts, and the payment of wages, let alone guilds, does not appear until the twelfth century.⁸ Before that, there is only circumstantial evidence for the kind of bonds that both protected and controlled artisans, especially those with exceptional skills. Few historians have followed Pierre Bonnassie in thinking that 'classical' slavery ended with the arrival of feudalism c. 1000, and instead have focussed mostly on the

6 Rio, 2006, 7-40.

7 Hitchcock, 2008, 69-74.

8 Epstein, 1991, 50.

social implications of unfreedom.⁹ The possible repercussions for the production of art into the eleventh century have as yet received little attention. But the commonly held image of the independent artist, or team, working his way up and down roads is difficult to prove at any of these periods, probably because it is inaccurate.

Over the last thirty years Spanish and Portuguese scholars have produced a multitude of specialist regional studies, and I am indebted to many of them. The material and the scholarship is often highly valuable but all too often it remains circumscribed by modern regional divisions on maps that have no relation to territories held in ancient or medieval periods. Few attempts have been made to bring together the findings of these regional studies or to see what effect they have on the overall picture. Moreover, most of them are not available in English and thus have not penetrated the wider Anglophone literature on early medieval art. The amount of material available continues to increase and the scholarly disagreements within the literature remain exceptionally impassioned. Whilst attempting to be even-handed and inclusive in referencing, this book has had to be selective and to take a view, which is inevitably contentious. Above all I hope that it opens up questions to a wider group of scholars and initiates more opportunities for dialogue.

This study also works across media, with more attention, by and large, paid to architecture and sculpture, but without ignoring mosaics, metalwork, ivories, or textiles. Some wall paintings are included, but discussion of manuscript illumination is generally omitted because it is such a large subject. Nonetheless, the rhythms of manuscript production and exchange are important, partly because they provide dated benchmarks. In order to

integrate material in different media from such a broad chronological range, I have had to work across disciplines and period specializations. The descriptive languages employed in each specialist area have varied, and I have endeavoured to make these intelligible to each other and for non-specialists, whilst continuing to address key research questions.¹⁰ The results are intended to provide a framework for those not previously familiar with this material, as well as offering some new interpretations of this art and architecture to those who know it well. The images included here are those that are key to the visual argument. Others can be found in major exhibition catalogues from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), *The Art of Medieval Spain A.D. 500-1200* and *al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*.¹¹ I hope to make additional images available on my website: www.rosewalker.co.uk. Likewise, the cited publications are not intended to be exhaustive but to highlight more recent work and to support further research.

The first chapter sets out the infrastructure of the Roman roads and focuses on two aspects. The first is the well-known correlation between those roads and the geography of the peninsula, the mountain ranges, rivers, and coasts that shaped the ways of communication. The second highlights the relationship between the roads and the geology of the peninsula, the building stone that was necessary for the development of monumental settlements and the minerals that sometimes generated considerable wealth. In the long period from 200 BC to AD 300 the peninsula was oriented towards Rome, economically and culturally, while metals and other resources were steadily extracted

9 Bonnassie, 1991, 1-59; Rio, 2006, 7-12.

10 For neglect of al-Andalus by modern medievalists and gulfs between disciplines, see Beech, 2008, 311-24.

11 *AAAS*, 1992; *AMS*, 1993.

and exported. The most established route throughout this period was the *Via Herculeia*, renamed the *Via Augusta*, which ran parallel to the east coast until it eventually turned inland to meet the river Guadalquivir. This road served Tarragona, the provincial capital, and crossed the major inland route along the river Ebro. A second north-south artery, now known as the *Via de la Plata*, linked the southern coast and the Guadalquivir to the northern Atlantic seaboard. Further routes gave access to mines, crucially those of the northwest, or followed the Tagus (Tajo in Spanish, Tejo in Portuguese) and Duero (Douro) rivers, so that by the end of the second century AD a visible infrastructure had been constructed across the peninsula, an articulation that endured throughout the period covered by this study and beyond. This chapter gives due weight to the buildings and sculpture of the provincial capitals, Tarragona, Mérida, and Córdoba, which emulated public spaces in Rome and had a potent legacy, but also considers a range of places and structures, whose form, masonry, or decoration survived into later centuries. Materials, workmanship, and building typologies could all be local or imported, although luxury objects tended to belong to the latter category. Whilst the survey of material is careful to acknowledge regional differences that might contribute to debates about 'Romanization', it is ultimately concerned with the shared languages of the Roman Empire.¹² Many excavations have been undertaken and published over the last thirty years. Earlier interventions on sites often remained unrecorded, which means that large numbers of objects in museums lack a secure provenance. Simon Keay has provided a comprehensive summary of work between 1990

and 2003, so this chapter will draw attention to some of the work published since then.¹³

The second chapter examines the high art of the villa estates and the development of a Christian topography. Over the last two decades archaeologists and historians have provided a much more detailed context for the towns and villas of late antique Spain and Portugal.¹⁴ Some of this has been in response to what was seen as too formalist and art historical an approach to the study of the art and architecture and in particular to the treatment of high quality mosaics in isolation from their buildings and sites. This chapter aims to encapsulate much of this new contextual material as well as treating the mosaics as works of art. For this it employs methodologies that have proved successful in other studies of late antique art, including a consideration of the role of *paideia* and of early Christian texts. The elites of the peninsula formed a range of social networks that deployed wealth in order to enhance their status. The same or related aristocratic elites held estates in North Africa, as well as in Italy or Gaul. They shared essentially the same values and aspirations, the same late antique taste, and competed with one another to display their knowledge and preservation of the classical past. At the beginning of the fourth century the western side of the peninsula grew in importance, and the administrative centre of Hispania was moved to Mérida. The six provinces that it oversaw included *Mauretania Tingitana* (northern Morocco), thus extending the north-south axis as far as North Africa. Similarities between certain mosaics in the peninsula and others in North Africa are undeniable, although the mechanisms that constituted this connection remain unknown. The possibility of close social and trade links between the peninsula

12 Curchin, 2004.

13 Keay, 2003, 146-211.

14 Kulikowski, 2005a, 31-76.

and North Africa has led to heated debates in recent years. This is problematic, because modern Spain has emphasised its membership of Europe and marginalised its post-colonial links to North Africa, even though some of the most sophisticated intellectual and cultural developments of the fourth century took place in North Africa.

Christianity emerged in Hispania as a visible state religion alongside the flourishing pagan culture, and became more defined dogmatically and institutionally towards the end of the fourth century and into the fifth. This led, in turn, to the emergence of a Christian topography in parts of the peninsula. However, the dates, functions, and contexts of early Christian buildings, tombs, and funerary spaces are often contested. To complicate matters further, the same scholars rarely address the Christian monuments and the pagan material, although Kim Bowes and Michael Kulikowski have done much to remove that barrier. Aside from archaeologists, few others who have a command across that notional divide have considered the Spanish material to any great extent, perhaps because so much of it is fragmentary or lost. It is still not fully integrated into art historical debates around late antiquity. The end of chapter two considers the sparse material culture that may belong to the mid-to-late fifth century. This is a period of absence: after the end of Hydatius's chronicle in 468, there is silence, and, although archaeologists may argue about the effect of the fall of Rome on communities, the production of art and architecture in the peninsula almost ceases. Works that have been dated to this period combine significant changes in form with continuity of subject matter.

The third chapter tackles the Visigothic period. The uncertainties of the two hundred years between AD 300 and 500 are dwarfed by

those of the next two hundred, as during the sixth century the peninsula became increasingly fragmented. The arrival of immigrants and other travellers from the east and from North Africa further differentiated cultural connections. Centres like Mérida were able to perpetuate a version of the late late-antique lifestyle, whilst other regions became increasingly impoverished. Trade and church building was able to take place in some circumstances but by the seventh century most of this had halted. In the popular imagination, and indeed often in the scholarly one too, the Visigoths occupy an iconic place.¹⁵ They are the great builders amongst the barbarian kingdoms, the exception to the modest architectural achievements of the Merovingians and the Lombards. Some scholars have modified this picture by arguing that these imposing structures must be the work of indigenous Hispano-Romans facilitated by the peace maintained by the ruling Visigoths. Others, notably Luis Caballero and María de los Ángeles Utrero, have reassigned the main structure of many of these buildings to the ninth or tenth centuries on the basis of archaeology and stratigraphy.¹⁶ Their analyses remain a rich source of information, even if the interpretation has provoked strong reactions. Building archaeology has a longer tradition in the UK, where it works more harmoniously with typological and stylistic approaches.¹⁷ This chapter will go even further and cast doubt on the existence of significant building in the peninsula during the seventh century. Challenges to the exceptional architectural achievements of the Visigoths have not had a smooth path, as the material is physically and conceptually difficult. The idea of a Visigothic kingdom capable of executing monumental

¹⁵ Dodds, 1990, 7-26.

¹⁶ Caballero, 2000; Utrero, 2010, 1-33.

¹⁷ See, for example, Harris, 1975, 109-21.

architecture that preceded and rivalled the Carolingians, the Byzantines, and the Arabs has been immensely seductive. It has been built into the mythology of the lost Christian Visigothic kingdom and thus of the *reconquista*. In Spain, Franco joined earlier rulers who had used that supposedly glorious past to enhance their own reigns. In Portugal, Salazar promoted the medieval era as a golden period of castle, church, and monastery. When national treasures were exchanged between the governments of Pétain's Vichy France and Francoist Spain, Visigothic votive crowns found outside Toledo, but kept in Paris, were high on the list. The crown of King Recceswinth from that hoard will help to provide a methodology for this chapter, which will present the fragmentation and accretion of Visigothic period culture, and its late late-antique taste.

In chapter four the architectural and artistic achievements of the Asturian kings of the ninth century are discussed in the context of both the Carolingian renewal north of the Pyrenees and the building projects of the Umayyad emirs in al-Andalus. All these rulers were interested in the re-invention of the classical past and the reclamation of its technical skill, albeit for different purposes. The monuments of Asturias have been recruited as products of a nascent national story and as signifiers of reconquest, which has distorted their historiography and occasioned later interventions in buildings and objects. This chapter accepts the precept of Caballero and Utrero: that it would not have been possible to revive Roman and late antique techniques of building simply by a process of 'look and learn'. Instead the question is: how was the expertise acquired? Several features suggest that artisans came from al-Andalus, and that once they were in the north they not only contributed their prior knowledge but also engaged with local materials and with the decorative programmes of local surviving

Roman buildings. The interaction between them and their new environment could be immensely creative. It is difficult to identify the circumstances of their arrival, or perhaps more accurately, their sporadic presence, but it indicates more regular and active exchange between communities and individuals in the north and south of the peninsula at this period than is often assumed. One significant circumstance concerns King Ramiro I, who defeated the Vikings in 844 and captured their treasure. This successful defence was perhaps as important as any military action against the Muslims and represented a sudden injection of wealth that either included expertise or enabled its purchase. His contemporary, Muhammad, son of the Rustumid imam in North Africa and in the service of the Cordoban emir, may have helped to repel the Norsemen from al-Andalus, so it is possible that the two men had significant diplomatic contact. By the end of this century, when there was discord in al-Andalus, it looked as if the Asturian kingdom was not only holding its own against the Arabs but also beginning to gain territory. Side by side with this newfound Asturian confidence went a renewed interest in history and especially in the Goths. Chronicle writing flourished and provided the first substantial surviving historical accounts since the Arab invasion of 711. The relationship between these texts and the architectural record is problematic, and I am indebted to Roger Collins for his earlier clarification of this material.¹⁸ In accordance with that I propose a late ninth-century context for churches often placed in the reign of Alfonso II, one that harmonizes with the genre of the chronicles although not with their literary assertions. Archaeologically there is clear evidence of communication between Asturias and al-Andalus, as architectural and

¹⁸ Collins, 1989, 1-18.

decorative elements familiar from buildings in Córdoba appeared in churches in the north, showing that there was contact between the courts of Asturias and al-Andalus, even if we cannot be sure of the mechanisms of exchange. Diplomatic gifts and trade in goods and people are the most likely means, alongside voluntary migration, but booty, including captive artisans or ransom payments, is also possible. In this period groups of craftsmen with Andalusī expertise can be found working in the north. The military advantage was not to last but the appropriation of building and decorative techniques from al-Andalus, combined with interest in the Goths, was to have a long and inventive after-life.

One consequence of locating the Asturian churches in the reign of Alfonso III is the questions that it raises regarding other churches assigned to the ninth century. Chapter five maintains that the art and architecture of tenth-century Spain and Portugal was the period of greatest achievement. That description clearly holds for the Great Mosque of Córdoba and for the city of Madīnat-al-Zahrā in the south, and I wish to maintain that it holds also for the so-called 'Mozarabic' art of the north. Thus this chapter examines 'Mozarabic' architecture in the context of the caliphal architecture of Córdoba. In particular it considers the relationship of 'Mozarabic' art to the transformation of the Great Mosque and of the city-palace at Madīnat al-Zahrā in the middle of the tenth century. Throughout the period c. 930 to c. 1000 the Arabs were in the ascendancy militarily, economically, and culturally. The northern kingdoms, essentially tributary satellite states, benefited from the artistic vibrancy of Córdoba and from its contacts with Byzantium. The Andalusī buildings had a rhythm of development, which I suggest applied similarly to those in the north. For example, both the Great Mosque of Córdoba and Madīnat

al-Zahrā were brought to their culmination in the reign of al-Hakam II (r. 961-976). I argue that some of the 'Mozarabic' churches may be better dated to coincide with those apogees of artistic achievement in the later tenth century. At the same time, in the north, the production of illuminated manuscripts was experiencing a period of exceptional maturity. This chapter will end by discussing a small group of figurative sculptures, some from the north often labelled 'Visigothic', and a piece from the south linked stylistically to dated manuscripts. It will consider whether these exceptional bodies and faces come from different periods or if they represent a new interest in the human figure at the end of the tenth century.

The first half of the eleventh century saw change on a massive scale in the peninsula. Between 1008 and 1031 the Caliphate of Córdoba imploded.¹⁹ Chapter six weighs up the artistic implications of this major event for the northern Christian kingdoms. What eventually emerged was a number of independent kingdoms, or *taifas*, of varying size and with diverse local allegiances and traditions.²⁰ The map of this period resembles a patchwork quilt, and this greater equivalence in territory, as opposed to the vast size of the old Caliphate, reflects the *realpolitik* of the time. Each kingdom had to vie for position regardless of religious affiliation. Catalonia and Castile had intervened as mercenaries on different sides of the conflict in Córdoba, and the resulting payment and booty that they took home boosted their economies and the position of their rulers. It may be no coincidence that this preceded a major period of architectural and artistic patronage in Catalonia and, to a lesser extent, in Castile. Almost nothing is known about what happened to the

19 Scales, 1994.

20 Wasserstein, 1985.

hundreds of craftsmen who had been trained and had worked in Córdoba. Several doubtless found a place in one of the taifa kingdoms. It is not inconceivable that others were employed – or owned – by Christian rulers. Catalonia and the influence of Bishop Oliba are often studied separately from the rest of the peninsula. This chapter, however, will consider the Catalanian works alongside the political events and artistic production of León, Castile, Navarre, and Aragón.

Both Gómez-Moreno and George Gaillard saw elements of 'Mozarabic' art in early Romanesque and shared an enthusiasm for Córdoba.²¹ Yet neither paid sufficient attention to the taifa kingdoms that were direct neighbours of Christian rulers. Instead Gómez-Moreno dismissed the art of the taifa kingdoms as degenerate, superficial, and derivative. In his opinion the fragmentation of the Caliphate was a disaster. More recently scholars have demonstrated that this was not a period of decline but one in which centres of sophisticated courtly art and literature flourished in architectural settings that continued to develop the repertoire of Córdoba.²² From the mid-eleventh century the sons of Sancho III of Navarre and the Count of Barcelona began to extract tributary payments, *parias*, from the taifa kingdoms. Chapter seven will examine how this new flow of wealth from south to north and across the east-west axis of the peninsula had an immediate and spectacular effect on luxury arts, especially at the Navarrese and Leonese courts. Accomplished buildings continued to be completed in Catalonia but only to a limited extent in the west of the peninsula, where relatively modest structures remained stage sets for the glittering new liturgical furniture. Highly innovative

metalwork and ivory carving took place at San Millán de la Cogolla (Navarre), where goldsmiths from the German Empire worked with ivory carvers, who probably had Andalusí training, to produce a large new shrine for St. Aemilian. The surviving ivory panels and the lost metalwork set out the full narrative of the saint's life as well as depicting the royal patrons, the rulers and scholars of the monastery, and the craftsmen who made the shrine. This kind of collaboration may be paradigmatic, and has far-reaching implications for art and architecture in the peninsula and beyond.

The eighth chapter considers the emergence of Romanesque art and architecture. Traditional methodologies have concentrated on the role of the pilgrimage roads and been caught up in the arguments about the precedence of Toulouse or Santiago de Compostela. This chapter explicitly avoids that approach and instead considers some of this highly complex material through an idea used by historians of this period, the friendship circle of Pope Gregory VII.²³ This nexus of social interaction overlaid the old network of roads. The richer documentary sources for this period make it possible to glimpse the agency of individuals, and perhaps even their personal lives, in the contemporary architecture and art. Sometimes this involved the royal families of León and Aragón, at other times bishops and papal legates were the important figures. It was those same papal legates who may have promoted the use of Roman or late antique exemplars, above all sarcophagi, as sources of artistic inspiration from Braga to Toulouse. In this choice they disregarded the intervening centuries of artistic development in the peninsula, picking up threads that were buried deep in the tapestry of Iberian artistic production.

21 Gaillard, 1938a; Gómez-Moreno, 1919; Gómez-Moreno, 1934.

22 Robinson, 2002.

23 Rennie, 2008, 475-496.

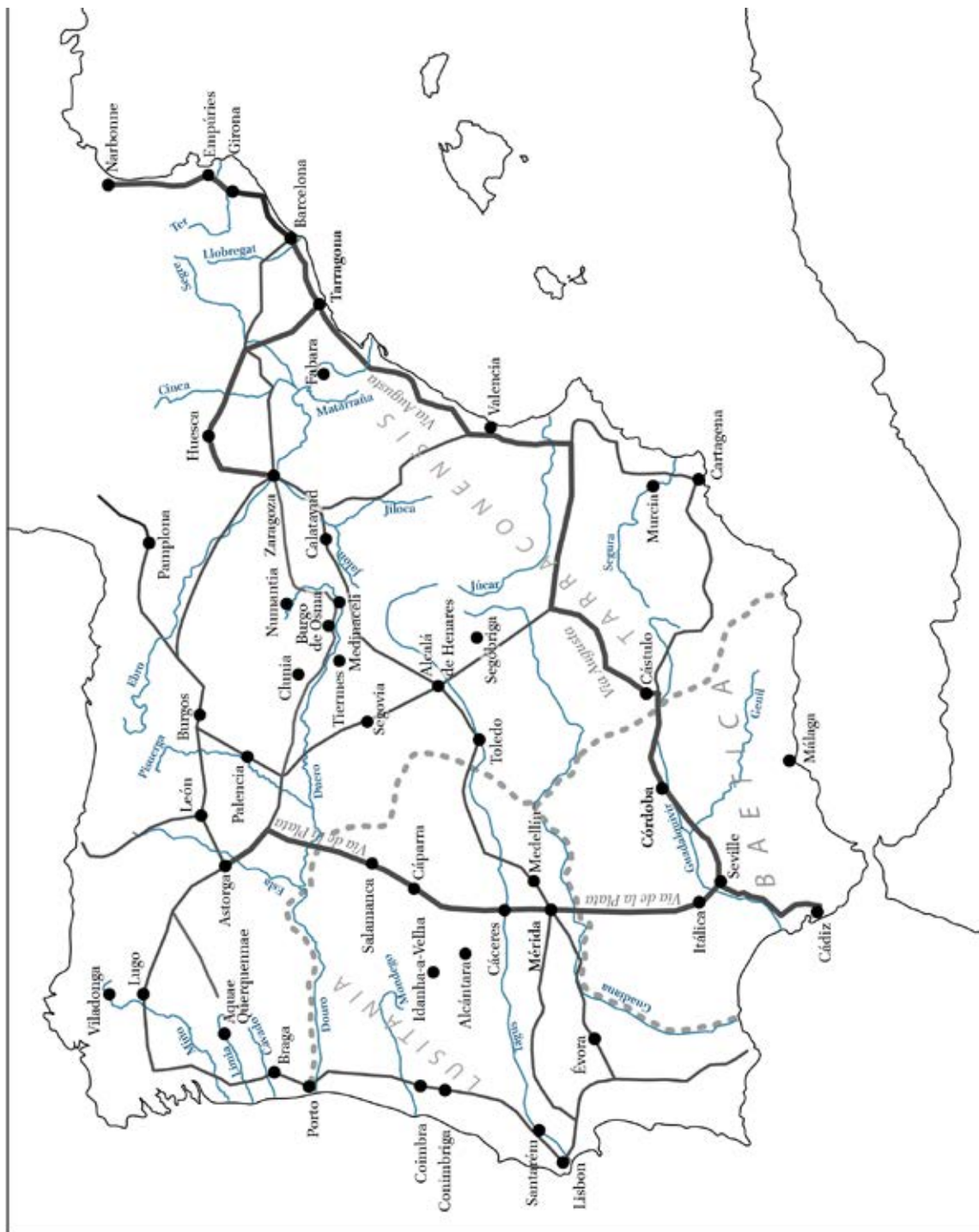
In 1085 Alfonso VI of León and Castile took possession of Toledo, the capital, and of much of the territory of the taifa kingdom. The Berber rulers of Toledo, close allies and perhaps even friends of Alfonso, had been generous patrons of the arts, who acquired ivory carvers. Although this event was not as significant as the fall of Córdoba – or the much later sack of Constantinople in 1204 – nonetheless this conquest had the potential to provide an immediate supply of new artists and materials in the kingdom of León. In this way, artistic expertise fostered by al-Andalus may have entered the northern kingdoms in the person of slaves and freedmen. They brought with them the classical artistic vocabulary that had evolved under the Umayyads and their successors. I propose that

they went on to circulate amongst the royal and papal networks of the peninsula and beyond as part of a complex network of obligations. The taking of Toledo had other repercussions, as the other taifa kingdoms responded by appealing to the Almoravid Berbers of North Africa for help, and Alfonso VI was increasingly unable to extract *paria* payments. This had not been a world of sentimental *convivencia*, but one of delicately balanced power relationships that were constantly negotiated, what Brian Catlos has called utility or '*conveniencia*'.²⁴ During the twelfth century the successes of the Berber Almoravid army and the militaristic Christianity of the papacy combined to destroy that equilibrium and to create a different world, one that lies outside the scope of this book.²⁵

24 Catlos, 2004, 407; Soifer, 2009, 24.

25 Brett, 1997, 105-13; O'Callaghan, 2003, 23-98.

Map I Topographic map of Hispania



1 The Lie of the Land

Art and Architecture Along the Roman Roads

This chapter will set out the geography and geology of Hispania, as these are fundamental to any understanding of its history and art history.¹ It will use the framework of the Roman roads to engage with the landscape, with the resources, and with the communication routes. Coasts and rivers brought life to the varied terrain, cutting through the barriers formed by the mountain ranges, and the major Roman roads often followed them.² Frequently based on tracks that linked earlier settlements, the roads facilitated the movement of troops and equipment in a long process of occupation. Once territory was secured, a denser network of routes was used for the extraction of resources, especially precious metals, and to support trade in olive oil and wine.³ Tracing the bones and veins of the peninsula, these roads linked the centres of power and wealth. Many of the routes ran close to local quarries, usually no more than 30 km from the towns, and provided rubble and lime for foundations, as well as ashlar blocks for walls.⁴ Both architectural elements and statues were sculpted from these local materials. Relatively small amounts of imported stone, mostly Italian or Greek marbles, arriving by sea or river, decorated provincial capitals.⁵ Statues – and later

sarcophagi – were also imported, alongside a range of luxury goods. The legacy of the Roman material will be important in this book, so possible survivals, demolition and restoration all need to be borne in mind. Although in most cases only foundations can be seen today, many buildings remained standing long after the end of Hispania as a Roman province. Over later centuries, structures were plundered for their ashlar masonry, and above all for their marble, leaving the concrete under-structure exposed to view. These stones and decorative elements often formed new buildings. As a result the Roman layer does not form a static body of material; instead it has been manipulated, re-used, re-carved, and re-located.

The Via Herculea: Iberians, Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans

As part of their activities across the Mediterranean, Phoenicians and Greeks had established trading centres on the east and south coasts of the peninsula. Traces of the former are evident in Málaga, Huelva, and Cádiz, and the Greek settlements on the northeast coast often retained their character into the Roman period. This trade was predominantly maritime and occasionally riverine, but a road supported it, which ran along the east coast until it turned inland to follow the river Guadalquivir to Córdoba and Cádiz.⁶ The destination of this route was reflected in its name, *Via Herculea*, which associated it with the tenth labour of Hercules,

1 Keay, 1988, 8-24; Curchin, 1991, 10-23.

2 Campbell, 2012.

3 For an overview of archaeological work on mining, see Keay, 2003, 195; for mining see Kay, 2014, 43-58; Domergue, 1990; Mattingly, 1988, 52-53; for ancient texts on Roman mining in Hispania, see Humphrey, 1998, 173-204.

4 Russell, 2013, 65; for a recent overview of the variety of these structures, see Moret, 2004.

5 Rodà de Llanza, 2012, 85-91.

6 Solana Sáinz, 2006b, 175; Nünnerichen-Asmus, 1993, 123-133.

the Greek mythical hero. Hercules had to find his way to 'the uttermost parts of the world', to the island of Erytheia, thought to be the land around the delta of the Guadalquivir, near Cádiz, or the rocks known as the Pillars of Hercules. There he had to cross the river Oceanus that encircled the world, kill the giant Geryon, and drive his cattle back to Greece. By the third century BC, Greek writers had begun to talk about a real *Via Herculea* that went through the lands of the Celts and the Iberians.⁷ Greek traders had founded two colonies on the northern Mediterranean coast, Marseille and Empúries (Emporion), the latter meaning 'trading-post' and located between the estuaries of the rivers Ter and Fluvia. Meanwhile the Carthaginians took over old Phoenician trade routes around the south and east coasts of the peninsula, including the roads used to manage the silver mines. In 226 BC the Romans, perceiving the expansionist threat, agreed a treaty with the Carthaginians, making the river Ebro (*Iberus*) the northern limit of Carthaginian activity.⁸ Taking advantage of their alliance with the Greeks of Marseille, the Romans went on to use Empúries as a port and base for the Punic Wars that ensued.⁹ The trade links formed by the routes around the northwestern Mediterranean, between Marseille and the east coast of the peninsula, would persist in different guises, as would those across the sea towards Rome. Under the Romans, in the first century AD, much of the old town of Empúries was re-built and a new walled town constructed on the hill behind. The new town had elements that were to be typical of settlements from Italy, with a forum and a porticoed temple on a podium dedicated to the Capitoline Roman gods, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. Building measurements

suggest that the stonemasons were working in Italic not Roman feet and may have come by sea from Campania, the area around Pompeii, also originally an important Greek colony.¹⁰ Craftsmen from Italy were probably responsible for a number of pavements made in *opus signinum*, cement given a pinkish tint by crushed terracotta. These pavements used the same technique and repertoire of ornament but varied the use and form of inscriptions depending on the location and the patron. Examples from Empúries have lattice and meander patterns set in white tesserae against the terracotta background; occasionally they have generic inscriptions of good wishes in Greek.¹¹ Inland, along the river Ebro, beyond the navigable section used by the Greeks for trade, a fragment of an *opus signinum* floor was discovered in 1990 at Mendigorria (*Andelos*), in present-day Navarre (fig. 1). A meander border in small white tesserae sits alongside a band of vine scroll picked out in equally small black tesserae. Most remarkably the inscription is probably in an Iberian language.¹² Another example with a similar inscription and a range of motifs was found in the 1980s during the excavation of a settlement at La Caridad de Caminreal (Teruel), on the river Jiloca. The mines of the nearby Sierra Menera were important for iron, which was processed and worked around Caminreal, where the overseer may have commissioned this pavement.¹³ Back on the *Via Herculea*, an *opus signinum* pavement at Tarragona greeted visitors with a Latin AVE VALE, 'hail farewell'. Much further south, several *opus signinum* floors have been found in Cartagena (*Carthago Nova*), including one within a temple enclosure of uncertain dedication, although the

7 Aristotle, 1936, 235-325.

8 Curchin, 1991, 24-25.

9 Curchin, 1991, 24-39; Keay, 1988, 25-46.

10 Ruiz de Arbulo, 1991, 27-29.

11 Dunbabin, 1999, 144-45.

12 Mezquíriz, 1991-92, 365-67.

13 Fernández Díaz, 2003, 209-40.

Figure 1 Mendigorria, *opus signinum* pavement (Museo de Navarra, Pamplona)



pavement, located in a small shrine, expresses devotion to a Syrian fertility goddess, *Atargatis*, a cult that had probably arrived with the Carthaginians.¹⁴ Near the far end of the *Via Herculea*, in Santiponce (*Itálica*), where the victorious general Scipio had settled his veterans alongside a mixed population, another fragmentary *opus signinum* mosaic bears an inscription in white tesserae that marks the funding of a temple of Apollo.¹⁵ The name of an official is given as M. Trahius, leading to speculation that this could have been one of the ancestors of Emperor Trajan, whose family, the Ulpii, came from this region.¹⁶

From the middle of the first century AD, some of the more affluent houses in Empúries

had *opus sectile* floors, with designs formed by slices of different coloured marbles.¹⁷ Other houses in the new town acquired black and white geometric mosaics, occasionally enlivened by an inserted panel or *emblema*. One unique panel of *opus vermiculatum* – mosaic made from very small tesserae (2-4mm) – was almost certainly imported; its exact provenance is problematic, and it has been restored.¹⁸ Probably a copy of a famous painting of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia (fig. 2), the theme seems particularly apt for a port, as it shows the version of the myth with a happy outcome: Iphigenia is about to be executed by her father Agamemnon in return for a fair wind to Troy, when the goddess Artemis substitutes a deer for

14 Noguera, 2003a, 35-37.

15 Keay, 2010, 35-38; Fear, 1996, 36.

16 Caballos, 1987-1988, 299-317; Luzón, 2007, 195-197.

17 For the technique of *opus sectile*, see Dunbabin, 1999, 254-68.

18 Barral i Altet, 1986, 94-99.

Figure 2 Empúries, Sacrifice of Iphigenia, *emblema* mosaic (Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya, Empúries)



the young girl. Its survival is exceptional and may owe something to the story's similarity to the Christian narrative of the Sacrifice of Abraham, where a ram is substituted for his son Isaac.

The Romans chose to set up a new colony at the more defensive site of Tarragona (*Tarraco*), also on the *Via Herculea*. Tarragona lies some 70 kilometres north of the estuary of the river Ebro. One of the Iberian tribes, the Cessetani, had settled the hill nearest the sea and, with other Iberian neighbours along the coast, traded with the Greeks. The Romans built an encampment on a larger hill, again a short way inland, and surrounded the whole area down to the sea with walls of Cyclopean stones topped with ashlar blocks (*opus quadratum*). A carving of the goddess Minerva, set into the walls as guardian of the city, has survived in a damaged state; technical and stylistic analysis nonetheless indicates that it was carved by a local sculptor and not one imported from

Rome.¹⁹ Tarragona became the capital of the province of *Hispania Citerior* and remained the Spanish city most closely linked to Rome until the end of the Roman Empire. After they expelled the Carthaginians from the peninsula in 204 BC, the Romans took over the silver mines further south around Cartagena.²⁰ The *Via Herculea* gave them access to the fertile hinterland of the river Guadalquivir, eventually linking with the sea lanes and the *Via de la Plata* which led to the rich silver deposits of Aznacóllar, near Itálica, which also yielded gold, copper, lead, and iron.²¹

The Via Augusta and Monumentalizing the Provincial Capitals

Under Augustus the map of Hispania began to change. He divided the peninsula into three provinces: Hispania Ulterior Baetica with its capital at Córdoba (*Corduba*) on the river Guadalquivir, Lusitania with its capital at Mérida (*Emerita Augusta*) on the river Guadiana, and Tarraconensis, still with its capital at Tarragona (*Tarraco*). Augustus also ordered repairs along the old *Via Herculea* in 2 and 1 BC, and again in AD 13 and 14, so it became known as the *Via Augusta*. He set up a colony near the road at Barcelona (*Barcino*).²² The first magistrates came from the Galeria, a central Italian tribe who had already colonised Narbonne (*Narbo Martius*) in Languedoc-Roussillon. Barcelona was a small walled town with a forum and temple built from limestone quarried locally

19 Pina Polo, 2003, 111-19; Noguera, 2003b, 166-67.

20 Keay, 1988, 52.

21 García Romero, 2002; García Vargas, 2008, 247-70.

22 Fear, 1996, 63-70; MacMullen, 2000, 74.

on Montjuïc.²³ The proportions of the temple have been compared to those of the Temple of Augustus and Livia at Vienne (Poitou), and it has also been linked to monuments at Glanum and Arles (Provence), associations that reflect the magistrates' familial network.²⁴ Barcelona guarded rich territory around the river Llobregat, where vines and other crops thrived, alongside iron and possibly silver mines. Further up the river at Cardona, on a tributary of the Llobregat, rich salt deposits may have been valuable for the fish sauce (*garum*) produced at Barcelona.

A greatly improved infrastructure of aqueducts, bridges, and engineered roads began to mark the landscape. The architectural expression of the new order would be most evident in the provincial capitals, although during Augustus's lifetime it is uncertain that any of them had a forum as grand as the one that the emperor built in Rome, with a temple clad in Luna (Carrara) marble and statues that embodied his descent from Aeneas, the founder of the city.²⁵ The colonial forum at Tarragona, not far from the port and the theatre, had developed through a number of phases; the first small Temple of Jupiter, with an *opus signinum* pavement, was rebuilt twice acquiring an imposing portico of eight columns (octastyle), probably of local stone.²⁶ At Mérida, the new colony was laid out on an urban grid, at the centre of which was a forum with a temple built of local granite covered with stucco. From the beginning there was a significant use of brick-faced concrete (*opus testaceum*), a technique employed by

military labour.²⁷ As the capital of Lusitania, it was given a theatre and an amphitheatre, the first funded by Augustus's commander, Agrippa, and the second by the emperor.²⁸ Córdoba, in the south, may well have had a similar forum and theatre at this period.

Monumentalisation of the provincial centres, revetted in marble and replete with the iconography of the *Pax Augusta*, was completed under the later Julio-Claudians (AD 14-68: Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero). The aqueduct of Mérida, in granite ashlar with bands of brick (*opus mixtum*) and that at Tarragona, built in ashlar limestone (*opus quadratum*), are sometimes placed in the same context (fig. 3).²⁹ As none of these emperors displayed any particular interest in Hispania, it is unclear where the impetus lay for these projects. A further wave of building and refurbishment took place in the last decades of the century, under the Flavian emperors (AD 69-96: Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian), although yet again direct imperial intervention was rare, even though Vespasian offered Latin status (*ius latinum*) to all free inhabitants and citizenship to all magistrates.³⁰ Rome continued to benefit from the mineral and agricultural resources of Hispania, but was often content to manage their extraction and transportation through members of the local elite. The three provincial capitals emulated Augustan buildings in Rome, and seem to have rivalled one another in their ability to create temples and theatres. According to the historian Tacitus, Tarragona was amongst the first sites in the peninsula to honour the imperial cult, when in AD 15 the local inhabitants sent an embassy to Rome in order to gain permission to erect a temple to

23 Rodà de Llanza, 2002, 22-28; Curchin, 1990, 109, Table 5 and 182, no. 420.

24 Mierse, 1999, 118; Gutiérrez Behemerid, 1992, 95-105.

25 Zanker, 1988, 110-14; Beard, 2001, 165-75; Elsner, 1998, 3.

26 Ruiz de Arbulo, 2009, 157-68; Mar, 2010, 1-32; Mar, 2015, 162-79.

27 Pizzo, 2010, 147-74.

28 Edmondson, 2006, 261.

29 Leather, 2002, 50-54, 118-130.

30 Curchin, 2004, 89, 123-24.

Figure 3 Mérida, aqueduct in *opus mixtum*



Augustus.³¹ Duncan Fishwick's analysis of the controversies that surround the numismatic and archaeological evidence in favour of such an early date concludes that a temple for the provincial imperial cult was probably begun under the Emperor Tiberius (AD 14-37), even if the whole complex was not completed until the Flavian period (AD 69-96).³² The octastyle temple depicted on a brass coin of Tiberius (*sestertius*) was located on the most prominent site, at the highest point of the city, where the cathedral now sits.³³ Although the temple altar has not survived, something of its design may be discerned from its depiction on a gold coin (*aureus*) of Emperor Tiberius, which shows a garland, an offering bowl, and a frieze of vines,

all motifs associated explicitly with Augustan ideology and carved on the *Ara Pacis*, the Altar of Peace, in Rome. This area was remodelled in the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods.³⁴ At that time a much larger temple was constructed and clad in imported Luna marble carved by sculptors from Rome. Fragments of dramatic medallions (*clipei*) survive, including a head of Jupiter Ammon, which probably hung from the attic or parapet of the portico, in imitation of those in the Forum of Augustus at Rome.³⁵ Fragments of two composite capitals, a combination of Corinthian and Ionic with large volutes, may come from the complex; this would represent an early example of the use of that architectural order.³⁶ Excavations

31 Torregaray, 2013, 309-332.

32 Fishwick, 2002, 43-53.

33 Fishwick, 2000, 96-104; Fishwick, 2014, 1-4.

34 TED'A, 1989, 141-91.

35 Fishwick, 2002, 50.

36 Mierse, 1999, 225-27; Strong, 1960, 126.

under the present cathedral at Tarragona have yielded polychrome marbles from across the Empire: Luna from Italian Liguria; five types from Greece, including Parian marble; four from Turkey, others from Egypt and Algeria, as well as local marble.³⁷ These pieces of marble probably formed *opus sectile* pavements, which were popular not only in elite residences, as at Empúries, but also in spaces associated with the imperial cult. The geographic range of the marbles is sometimes thought to have imperial connotations, but the idea remains unproven.³⁸ On the terraces below the temple a circus for chariot racing was constructed during the Flavian period in limestone from the local quarry, El Mèdol, by the *Via Augusta*. The whole would have formed a shiny white backdrop to the city, visible not only from the lower city but also to any traveller arriving from the sea or along the *Via Augusta*.³⁹

The other two provincial capitals also looked to the Forum of Augustus in Rome for inspiration, and all three responses were sufficiently similar to suggest some kind of direction. Mérida (*Emerita Augusta*) lay on one of the main routes for the transportation of minerals and other products to the port of Seville (*Hispalis*) on the Guadalquivir, or via a secondary road to Lisbon (*Olisipo*). This road has become known as the *Via de la Plata*, the silver route, although it was probably never used for silver, and the name derives from 'Via Delapidata' or paved way. By the end of the first century AD, a new project had been completed at Mérida.⁴⁰ Sculptors who probably had experience of

working in central Italy carved a monumental marble portico for a new temple, with alternating caryatids and *clipei* with heads of Jupiter Ammon and Medusa (fig. 4).⁴¹ As at Tarragona, this choice of decoration recalled the Forum of Augustus in Rome through a self-conscious process of copying.⁴² Some of the detailing even referenced Augustan carving. The most obvious example is a panel from the forum in Mérida (fig. 5), carved from marble quarried in Vila Viçiosa (Portugal), which depicts a laurel tree with birds in the branches and a small snake coiling around its trunk, a seductive naturalism

Figure 4 Mérida, sculpture from the Forum, *clipeus* (Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, Mérida)



37 Álvarez, 2012, 196-203.

38 TED'A, 1989, 141-91.

39 Gutiérrez García-M, 2012, 665-79; for the exploitation of other quarries in the northeast, see Gutiérrez García-M, 2011, 318-41.

40 Mateos Cruz, 2006, 315-54; Jiménez, 2010, 41; Panzram, 2002, 227-31 for Mérida.

41 Trillmich, 2014, 427-67.

42 Jiménez, 2010, 38-63; Nogales, 2009, 119-50.

Figure 5 Mérida, sculpture from the Forum, marble panel (Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, Mérida)



emulating works like the *Ara Pacis*.⁴³ A particularly fine set of statues, male figures in togas, adorned the forum, standing in niches behind the portico. Made by one workshop, and signed above the knee 'from the workshop of (*ex officina*) Gaius Aulus', this set of figures probably dates from the second half of the first century AD.⁴⁴ Fragments of other statues may belong to a mythological group depicting Aeneas, his son Ascanius, and his father Anchises, all participants in the foundation legend of Rome from Virgil's *Aeneid*. If Trillmich's identification is correct, Mérida's forum was overtly copying the theme of the statues in the Forum of

Augustus in Rome.⁴⁵ During the Julio-Claudian or Flavian periods Mérida's theatre was given an architectural backdrop (*scaenae frons*) with a gallery of statues executed in Italian Luna marble and in local Estremoz marble. These depicted the gods that were especially favoured locally, Ceres, Pluto, and Proserpina, alongside emperors in military dress, and a togate figure named as Agrippa, who may be one of the mythical kings of Alba or Augustus's general Agrippa who helped to found the city.

In Córdoba (*Colonia Patricia Corduba*), the capital of Baetica, an adjacent forum alongside the colonial forum (*forum adiectum*), one of five in the city, was modelled on the Forum of Augustus in Rome. Only fragments have survived to give some indication of its scale and iconographic scheme: a colossal capital and column, probably from the temple; a massive male torso in armour, perhaps a copy of the statue of Aeneas in the Forum of Augustus; and part of a *clipeus* of Jupiter Ammon or Medusa.⁴⁶ A large temple, probably the provincial temple under the Flavians, was excavated in calle Claudio Marcelo in the late 1950s and partially reconstructed; parts of its tall fluted columns and some Corinthian capitals are *in situ*, whilst a section of the architectural entablature is in the Museo Arqueológico in Córdoba.⁴⁷ Originally six columns decorated its portico with a further ten along each side. The remains of a theatre in the vicinity, begun in the first century AD, were excavated in the 1990s and can now be seen below the new Museo Arqueológico.⁴⁸ Further excavations have uncovered the foundations of a massive amphitheatre that

43 Trillmich, 1993, 289-90, pl. 60.

46 Fishwick, 2000, 96-104; see also essays in Dupré i Raventós, 2004.

47 Fishwick, 2014, 1-4; Garriguet, 2007, 299-321; Knapp, 1983, 62-63.

48 Sánchez Velasco, 1999, 115-59.

43 Barrera, 2000, 130, cat. no. 493.

44 Fejfer, 2008, 321.

confirms the wealth and privilege of Córdoba at an early date.⁴⁹ Funerary monuments lined the western approach to the city, and excavations in 1990 discovered two large cylindrical mausolea that contained chamber tombs.⁵⁰ Archaeological work continues to improve knowledge of the imperial complexes in the three provincial capitals, and each find seems to indicate closer connections with the Forum of Augustus in Rome, as well as an awareness of one another's plans for monumentalisation. Even so, it is impossible to be sure exactly to what extent these complexes copied the Forum of Augustus or one another, since so much of the evidence is fragmentary and interpretation rests on reconstructions. Nor do we know how the local elite interacted with the governor and other temporary officials in each province to initiate and develop the projects, or the details of the social networks that linked them to Rome and to other individuals across the peninsula. It remains probable, however, that the architects, builders, and sculptors came from Italy and that they had worked on similar imitative projects.

On a smaller scale, imperial portraits were both imported and produced locally, some of them for the provincial complexes. José Garriguet has made a survey of their distribution, which shows surviving examples occurring above all in provincial capitals, the majority in Tarragona (14%), fewer in Mérida (9.5%) and Córdoba (5.6%). Otherwise he calculates that Baetica had the largest number, especially between AD 30 and 70, a peak which was matched by a similarly exceptional number of inscriptions.⁵¹ Protected by mountain ranges rich in minerals, Baetica's low-lying fertile

land in the river valleys of the Guadalquivir (*Baetis*) and the Genil (*Singilis*) was ideal for large estates that grew corn, vines, and olive trees.⁵² The quality of the local carving varied considerably, but in nearly all cases portraits were faithful copies of metropolitan portraits, which very closely tracked developments in Roman fashions. More colonies had been established in Baetica than any other region, and the majority of the peninsula's new senators had come from the same region, but this does not mean that it was uniformly 'romanized'. As Andrew Fear has shown, there was 'a mosaic of different choices' even within Baetica.⁵³ Across the peninsula the opportunities and restrictions were even more diverse.

The Golden Triangle: Astorga, Braga, and Lugo

The territory of the Cantabrians (*Cantabri*) and Asturians (*Astures*), a mountainous region that today encompasses Galicia and the northern part of León, had resisted occupation during the Republic. Emperor Augustus was to change that and complete the conquest of the peninsula.⁵⁴ He set up his headquarters at Sasamón (*Segisamo*), near present-day Burgos, the centre of the Turmodigi, a Celtiberian people already allied with Rome. Augustus was not waging war against the northwest merely for the sake of completeness; his rationale was gold on an industrial scale.⁵⁵ The local people had long collected the gold to be found on the surface or in the rivers and made it into finely crafted jewellery. The Romans showed no interest in manufacturing gold products but transported

49 Vaquerizo, 2011, 250; for the monumentalisation of Corduba, see Gutiérrez Deza, 2012, 493-99.

50 Ruiz Osuna, 2005, 79-104.

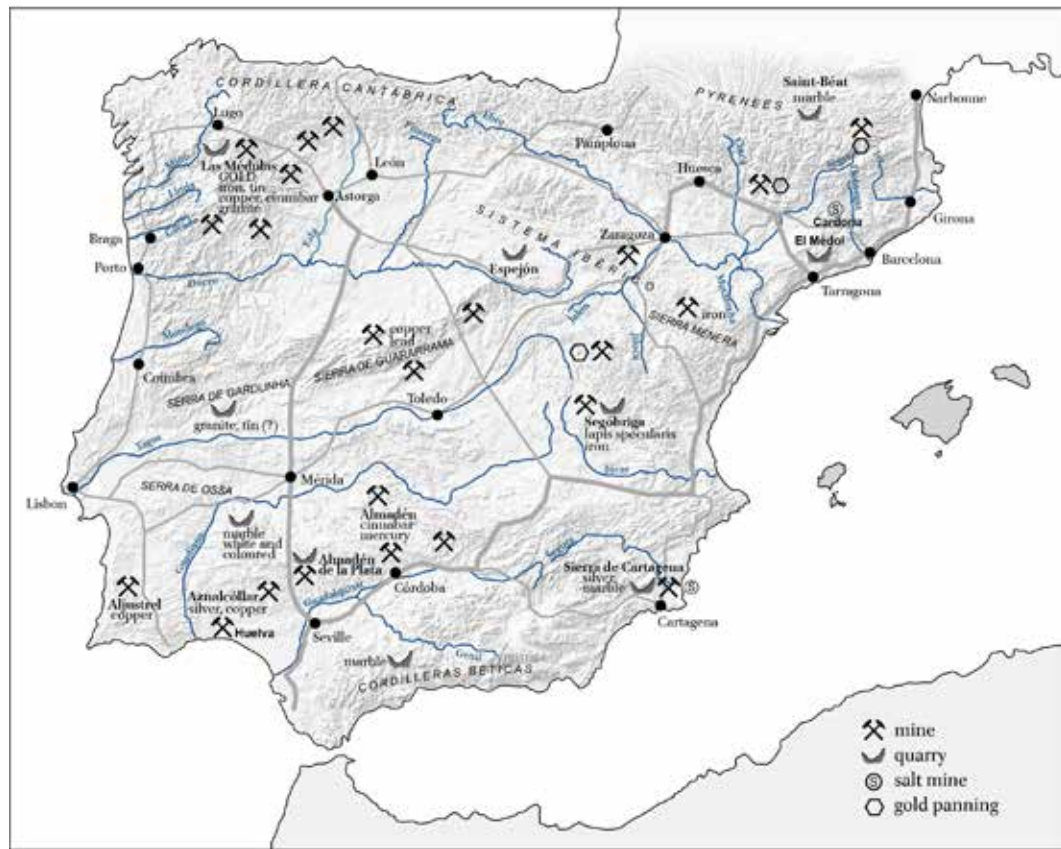
51 Woolf, 1998, 82, fig. 4.1.

52 Fear, 1996, 1-3.

53 Fear, 1996, 63-104, 272-76; Keay, 1988, 82-84.

54 Keay, 1988, 44-46.

55 Syme, 1969, 215-218.

Map II Map of the Principal Roads and Rivers of Hispania

the mineral to Rome to mint gold coins (*aurei*). They also had the technology to mine the gold seams, using water from higher mountains to build up pressure and split the rocks.⁵⁶ The landscape of Las Médulas still bears witness to this process of extraction, where iron oxide in the exposed quartzite sandstone creates dramatic orange-red streaks (fig. 6). The imperial mining operation also extracted tin and iron from the northwest, as well as copper and cinnabar pigments.⁵⁷ In addition to the direct geomorphological changes brought about by the mining, the area had to adapt in other ways

to support the large-scale operation.⁵⁸ A new nexus of roads facilitated safe storage of the minerals and their onward transport by river and sea to Rome. The army managed these processes, and military encampments were set up for the legions, most importantly for the *legio VI victrix* at León, including substantial granaries.⁵⁹ To secure the region, control the Cantabrian tribes, and collect tribute, Augustus founded three new legal and fiscal centres (*conventus*) at Astorga (*Asturica Augusta*), at Braga (*Bracara*

⁵⁶ Ruiz del Árbol 2014, 95–113; Humphrey, 1998, 185–89.

⁵⁷ Matías Rodríguez, 2000–2001, 127–40.

⁵⁸ Reher, 2012, 127–36.

⁵⁹ Morillo, 2009a, 239–251; for granaries, see Salido, 2009, 679–92; Morillo, 2009b, 389–406.

Figure 6 The Roman gold mines of Las Médulas (El Bierzo)

Augusta) on the river Cavado.⁶⁰ This triangle of towns, and their access to the Atlantic through ports at Gijón on the north coast, and at Porto (*Portus Cale*) on the west coast at the estuary of the River Douro, was at the heart of these communication routes. Roman sources presented the northwest as more savage than the rest of the peninsula, a place of animistic religion that imbued the abundant mountains and springs with spirits, perhaps in an attempt to justify their strong hold on the region.⁶¹ Meanwhile local elites who profited from this industry developed the towns.⁶² During the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods Astorga acquired an urban centre with a forum and

monumental drainage.⁶³ Around the end of the first century AD, some members of the elite had their houses painted in the Roman manner (fig. 7). Their taste was eclectic, bringing together elements more often found separately in Italy: red and blue panels along the dado decorated with plant sprigs and miniature cupids riding sea-monsters; architectural illusions including fluted columns; and stacked motifs, Mercury's hat, a pelta, and Apollo's lyre alongside floral decoration on a black background. In the context of a wide survey of Roman painting, Roger Ling saw this approach to motifs, colouring, and detailing as 'bizarre', and distinctly provincial.⁶⁴ Although archaeological evidence for urbanisation at Lugo in

60 For the status of a *conventus*, see Fear, 1996, 41-46, and Edmondson, 2006, 256-60.

61 Richert, 2005.

62 Edmondson, 2014, 688-90.

63 Sevillano, 2005.

64 Ling, 1991, 174; for the concept of 'provincial art', see Stewart, 2010.

Figure 7 Astorga, fragment of a wall painting (Museo de León)



this early period is scant, epigraphic texts confirm its importance, a useful reminder that the appearance of Latin on buildings would have been one of the most distinctive effects of Roman occupation.⁶⁵ Outside the city, the remains of a hill fort (Viladonga, Castro de Rei) preserve some of the small circular buildings typical of the local Celtic building tradition, but they also display clear evidence of Roman material culture.⁶⁶ The site may have begun as a religious centre, as there is no evidence of permanent pre-Roman settlement. One of the most unusual pieces of carving in the area may attest to this origin. At the site now known as the Fonte de Idolo, figures, inscriptions, and architectural frames are sculpted directly onto

the rock at the side of a small spring (fig. 8).⁶⁷ Three lines of one inscription name a patron, Cecilius Fronto, defined by his place of origin, *Arcobrigensis*, and by his clan, *Ambimogidus*. The fourth line of the inscription says 'FECIT', 'he made [this]', or ordered it to be made. A relief of a male figure in a toga stands to the right of the inscription. Still further to the right a pedimented niche, again carved in relief, contains a bust, and another name, *Tongonabiagoi*, is carved in large letters alongside it.⁶⁸ The spring may have been dedicated to Nabia, a goddess of water who was popular in the north and west of the peninsula.⁶⁹ The male figure most likely depicts the patron. Recent excavations (2002-2003) have suggested that the carving

65 Martínez Arias, 2011; Rodríguez Colmonero, 1996.

66 Arias Vilas, 1996.

67 Garrido Elena, 2008.

68 Richert, 2006, 7, 16-17.

69 Tranoy, 1981, 281-83.

Figure 8 Braga, Fonte de Ídolo

was once protected by an atrium and that a further inscription under a larger pediment attested to the continuing involvement of the family. This kind of monument raises questions of ‘Romanization’, a problematic term, since there is no evidence that Rome had a policy to impose its culture on the provinces.⁷⁰ Instead the concept has been reinvented as self-Romanization, what Simon Keay has called ‘an internally driven process’. The kind of Hispano-Romans that emerged from this may have been behind the shrine at Fonte de Ídolo.⁷¹ The idea of visual koinés has also been employed recently, a linguistic metaphor that sees some provincial art as a new visual dialect arising from contact between indigenous

and Roman art.⁷² This rock-carved temple at Braga could be seen in that light, as could a few other examples in Hispania, but they are probably not sufficiently numerous to constitute a shared dialect or koiné. That said, many of the potential indigenous contributions, such as the delicate gold jewellery from the northwest, have been lost.⁷³

Most of the buildings in Braga date from the Flavian or Antonine (AD 138-180) periods, including the forum and a large second-century baths complex. The Flavians also extended the road network, improving access to the lower reaches of the river Douro (Duero) and the port of Porto (*Portus Cale*) on the Portuguese coast. Routes ran parallel with the coast from Braga to Santarém (*Scallabis*) and Lisbon

70 Woolf, 1998, 1-23; Fear, 1996; Keay, 2001, 117-44.

71 Keay, 2001, 137.

72 McCarty, 2011, 495-504.

73 Fernández Ochoa, 2007, 11-26.

(*Olisipo*), and inland to Coimbra (*Aeminium*) and Conimbriga, whence the road joined the main north-south artery, the *Via de la Plata*. The rich coastal lands were agricultural, producing cereals, wine, and olive oil, as well as supporting sheep-farming in the hills. The town of Cáparra (*Capera*), on the *Via de la Plata*, was a major trading centre. In the Flavian period, it was given the rank of *municipium*, which meant that all its residents had Latin status, and the elite might progress to Roman citizenship after the necessary magistracies and displays of generosity (*euergetism*). It may be no coincidence that the town began to acquire a range of monuments, including c. AD 100 a small four-way arch (*tetrapylon*), faced in ashlar (*opus quadratum*), which marked a crossroad in the centre of the town, between the forum and quarters with housing and shops.⁷⁴ Conimbriga was likewise a thriving commercial centre. A pre-Roman *oppidum* on a raised plateau, the site is protected by mountains and the river Mondego on its north side, and was used as a military stronghold by the Romans in the conquest period. Under the Flavians, the resident elite built a new temple for the imperial cult in local limestone. A head thought to represent Divus Augustus, found in the forum, may have belonged to this complex. Somewhat roughly carved from Estremoz marble, a quarry close to Mérida, this head was probably reworked from a portrait statue of Claudius (fig. 9).⁷⁵ The southern end of the *Via de la Plata* met the *Via Augusta* in a region rich not only in quarries but most significantly in silver and copper mines. This silver may have been crucial for minting Roman coins (*denarii*) from the Flavian period onwards.⁷⁶

Figure 9 Conimbriga, portrait head of Emperor Claudius/Augustus (Museu Monográfico de Conimbriga)



East-West and Mining the Meseta

Five rivers and their tributaries have always determined east-west patterns of settlement in the peninsula. Four, the Duero (Douro in Portuguese), the Tagus (Tajo in Spanish and Tejo in Portuguese), the Guadalquivir, and the Guadiana flow westwards into the Atlantic, whilst the Ebro runs eastwards pouring into the Mediterranean. These low-lying river valleys, along with the coasts, were the lands that most appealed to the Romans. East-west communication in the south of the peninsula relied mostly on the *Via Augusta*, which linked the coast to the Guadalquivir valley. In the north, the river Ebro and the roads that ran parallel to it provided the main access route. This continued to Astorga, or branched close to the source of the river Duero to follow that river, eventually as far as Braga and the Atlantic coast. The central Duero valley was

⁷⁴ Nünnerichen-Asmus, 1996.

⁷⁵ Garriguet, 2006, 159, 176.

⁷⁶ Keay, 1988, 65-66.

controlled by a *conventus* town, called Clunia. *Conventus* were juridical and fiscal centres, which also celebrated the imperial cult and offered alternative identities to the old tribal allegiances.⁷⁷ Clunia's territory stretched from the Bay of Biscay as far as the upper Duero and beyond.⁷⁸ Located on an extensive hill-fort, Clunia was strategically sited near the road along the river Duero, and at the head of a corridor that led into the centre. Even so, there is no evidence for municipalisation until the first century AD, most notably under the Emperor Claudius.⁷⁹ Around that time, a large forum was built in local stone, where the nearby quarry of Espejón provided a reasonable substitute for imported marble to face the floors and walls. Later a theatre was carved into the side of the hill, carefully planned to take advantage of the acoustic and structural advantages of the site. Surviving fragments of cornice and Corinthian capitals have been compared to elements in the Forum of Augustus and to the Augustan Maison Carrée in Nîmes, perhaps emulating earlier buildings in Hispania's provincial capitals.⁸⁰ Other distinctive reliefs, depicting armour and weapons as trophies, may suggest a strong military presence. This would be consistent with Clunia's moment in Roman history, when Galba, briefly emperor AD 68-69, raised the *VII Gemina* legion there prior to his bid for the throne. He may have settled some veterans in Clunia, which continued to flourish under the Flavian emperors. In its scale and varied design the baths complex (Los Arcos) recalls the imperial baths of Titus in Rome. A large market building (*macellum*) was built close to the forum. It had an unusual amphora-like

shape with a narrow porticoed entrance and an arcade that ran around the interior. Palol argued that the plan was not typical of the peninsula, but had analogues in North Africa at Gigthis (Bou Ghara, Tunisia) and Timgad (Algeria).⁸¹ The rich mixture of architectural plans found in Clunia is a useful reminder of the variety of structures and plans that could have survived, intact or ruined, into later centuries.

The *conventus* of Clunia included other settlements on the Duero, which benefited to some extent from Roman engineering and architectural expertise, for example Osma (*Uxama*).⁸² In contrast, Numantia, which had fallen to the Romans only after years of warfare and resistance, had only wooden structures. As a punishment for their resistance, its Celtiberian inhabitants continued to have the status of foreigners (*peregrini*), not of Roman citizens. Despite occupying a high hill at the confluence of the Duero and Tera rivers, an almost impregnable natural defensive position, Numantia was never reinvented as a Roman city. Some important mining areas on the meseta were also part of this juridical district. Although the meseta was not rich in gold and silver mines like the northwest or the southeast, most of the settlements in the centre still related to mineral extraction, for the meseta was rich in iron, copper, and lead. On the road from Clunia, an established Celtiberian *cañada* or drovers' route led to Tiermes (*Termes*). A *municipium* from the time of Augustus or Tiberius, Tiermes has been called 'the Spanish Pompeii', but being carved out of the rose-red sandstone bedrock, it has perhaps more claim to be the Hispano-Roman Petra.⁸³ One of the last hill-forts to be conquered by the Romans from the Celtiberian Arevaci in 98 BC, it became rich by processing

77 Curchin, 2004, 54-57.

78 Ozcáriz, 2006, 26, 100.

79 Garriguet Mata, 2006, 171-72.

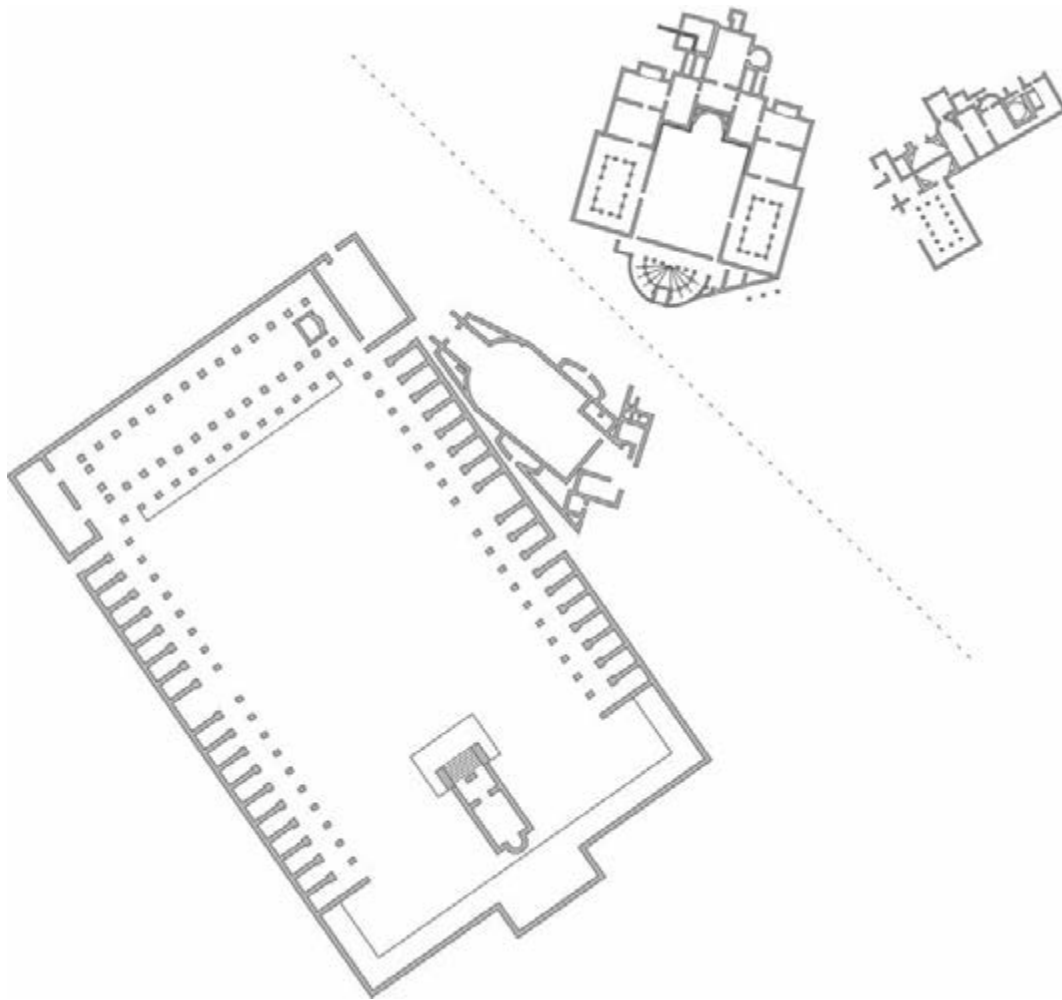
80 Gutiérrez Behemerid, 2011, 817-28; Gutiérrez Behemerid, 2000, 81-100.

81 Palol, 1994, 57-60.

82 Leather, 2002, 55-57.

83 Curchin, 2007, 89.

Plans I Plans from Clunia



the iron in the surrounding metal-bearing rocks and went on to develop the features of a Roman town from the first century AD.⁸⁴ Tiermes is the site in which indigenous and Roman visual vocabularies meet most emphatically. Local people were already experienced in extracting blocks of soft stone to hollow out homes in this natural defensive site, but a member of the elite decorated his with frescoes in black, red, and white, which imitated stone,

a technique that had been popular in towns closer to Rome, including Pompeii. Roman engineering combined with local knowledge to build an aqueduct that brought water across five kilometres, along a rock-cut channel, to be collected in a large cistern (fig. 10). As these rock-cut buildings do not provide the usual archaeological layers or stratification that help with dating, arguments about the relative contribution of local and Roman expertise remain controversial, although recent work has traced the development of the public spaces over the

84 Martínez Caballero, 2014.

Figure 10 Tiermes, aqueduct

first century AD.⁸⁵ What is certain is that some of the people in this town had Roman names and that they set up fine bronze and stone statues to themselves, to Roman gods, and to the imperial cult in a forum decorated with sculptural friezes and Corinthian capitals.⁸⁶ One of the surviving bronze heads may represent a local dignitary in the guise of Emperor Tiberius. In 1885, two silver spoons (*trullae*) were found in Tiermes, or more accurately two tiny pots with handles, which provide exceptional evidence for cultural complexity. The handles are elaborately chased with the faces of satyrs, a deer sitting in a rural landscape, and a tiny basket of fruits. The spoons are probably

imports from Alexandria, but minute inscriptions, no more than 4mm high, were added to record the ownership of a local man, Gnaeus Carvicius, a Roman forename and a Celtic family name.⁸⁷ Even the famous aqueduct at Segovia, located at the foot of a pass through the Sierra de Guadarrama, may belong in this metal-working context. The site controlled the upper river Eresma and would have been well placed to manage the surrounding copper supplies. The date of the aqueduct is uncertain and has been placed in the first or second centuries. Built from local granite blocks, it brought water from the mountains over some 30 kilometres to this naturally defensive place.

Augustus founded Zaragoza (*Caesaraugusta*) on the south side of the river Ebro around

85 Martínez Caballero, 2011, 771-85.

86 Beltrán Lloris, 2011, 19-59; Curchin, 2004, 87-88, 91, 132, 223-24, and 227.

87 García y Bellido, 1966, 113-23.

16 BC for the *VI Victrix* and *X Gemina* legions that had participated in the Cantabrian wars. It formed a communication hub that protected the essential east-west route along the Ebro and another road that ran southwest towards the centre as far as Alcalá de Henares (*Complutum*) and the valley of the river Tagus. Zaragoza also controlled trade that came from the north alongside the rio Gallego, and even across the Pyrenees.⁸⁸ Its *raison d'être* was its port, as the river Ebro was broad and easily navigable at this point. The road from Tarragona came via the town of Huesca (*Oscā*), an area where mines produced a steady flow of silver. It is likely that the military settlers of Zaragoza helped to oversee safe transportation to Rome, alongside any onward transport of gold from the northwest. The olive oil and wine trades may have grown on the back of the lucrative metal trade and shared its transport systems.⁸⁹ Zaragoza was also a *conventus*, whose domain ran from the Pyrenees to the valley of the river Tagus. Laid out on a grid plan by army engineers in the late Augustan period or perhaps under Tiberius, Zaragoza had an impressive set of buildings, a forum with a temple for the imperial cult, and a theatre, whose architectural elements were carved in marble from Saint-Béat in the Midi-Pyrénées. The stone could have been carried on mules through a mountain pass, or brought by river and sea.⁹⁰ But portrait statues, sculpted in Greek marble, that ornamented the public buildings were imported in a finished state.⁹¹ On the road south of Zaragoza lay Calatayud (*Bilbilis*), an important centre for smelting the iron ore deposits of El Montcayo, its water being particularly suitable for the

process.⁹² Once a Celtiberian hill-fort, it was re-founded as a *municipium*, after which the local elite funded municipal buildings. One of the surviving houses from the first century AD shows that they, like the elite of Astorga, had a taste for paintings that imitated marble and architectural features, including here a frieze with peacocks and fruit. The poet Martial (AD 40-c. 103) was born and educated in Calatayud before going to Rome, where he became a client of the family of the philosopher Seneca the Elder, whose origins were in Córdoba. In his *Epigrams*, Martial referred to *Bilbilis* as 'finest for metal' and renowned for its horses and weapons.⁹³

The vast area controlled by the *conventus* town of Cartagena (*Carthago Nova*) from its southeastern coastal site encompassed sites with exceptional mineral deposits. Segóbriga, on the edge of the meseta, was exceptionally well placed for mining an area that stretched north and south for some 150 km. The translucent *lapis specularis*, used for windows, mirrors, and ornament, was the *municipium's* most unusual product, but it also worked iron, quarried stone, and cultivated esparto grass for rope-making.⁹⁴ Such varied industry funded a fine set of buildings for public entertainment and leisure between the Flavian period and the second century, including an amphitheatre, a theatre, and a baths complex, built from a range of peninsular and imported stones.⁹⁵ Toledo (*Toletum*), on the river Tagus and in the centre of the peninsula, formed a natural defensive position on a bend in the river. Indications of Roman settlement are only gradually being uncovered, but a large circus for chariot racing, with a seating capacity

88 Beltrán Lloris, 2007, 8.

89 Mattingly, 1988, 49-56.

90 Sallayrolles, 2002, 61-81.

91 Koppel, 2007, 109-22; Escudero, 2007, 57-70.

92 Pliny the Elder, 1855, Book 34, 41.

93 Martial, 1919, I. 49, IV, 55, 58-61, 266-69.

94 Pliny the Elder, 1855, Book 36, 45; Pensabene, 2012, 161-75.

95 Álvarez, 2008, 101-20; Russell, 2013, 157.

of over 13,000, has been excavated and dated to c. AD 100.⁹⁶ It is not known whether this reflects the population of the town or if the audience was drawn from further afield. About halfway between Toledo and Córdoba was the mine of Almadén, where the extremely valuable mineral cinnabar was extracted. This was used to produce mercury and as a rich vermilion pigment for wall paintings and cosmetics. In the upper reaches of the river Tagus it may also have been possible to pan gold.

Art along the Roads in the Second and Third Centuries AD

In the second century the development of the peninsula began to shift towards the west. In AD 98, Trajan, a soldier from an Italian family that had long been settled in Baetica, became emperor of the Roman Empire. The first emperor whose family resided in the provinces, he was a talented military commander, and under his rule the Roman Empire reached its greatest extent. He showed no special interest in the country of his origin, but authorised the enhancement of work begun under the Flavians. In the northwest this centred on the *Via Nova* between Astorga and Braga, including the substantial military camp at *Aquae Querquennae*.⁹⁷ Indeed the greatest investment was in paved roads and bridges, especially along the *Via de la Plata* between Mérida and Salamanca (*Salmantica*) and around Braga in the west, as well as roads that served Cástulo (Jaén) in the southeast.⁹⁸ All this activity may be related to mining and troop movements. The most visible witness to Trajan's road building in Hispania is the bridge at Alcántara (104 AD), built by a

named architect, Gaius Julius Lacer, and dedicated by the local communities including the Igaeditani.⁹⁹ It spans the river Tagus for almost half a mile, close to the border between modern Spain and Portugal, and facilitated transport between Cáceres (*Norba Caesarina*) on the *Via de la Plata* and Idanha-la-Vehla (*Egitania*) (fig. 11).¹⁰⁰ Such a major piece of engineering may have been connected with tin, or perhaps even gold, mining in the area.¹⁰¹ The road continued to Conimbriga, where a large baths complex was built in this period. The design demonstrated awareness of developments in Italy, Gaul, and North Africa, perhaps acquired from visiting traders.¹⁰² In addition to the construction and repair of roads and bridges during Trajan's reign, there was greater articulation of the routes. The strategic site of Medinaceli sits on a high plateau, near the source of the river Jalón, which cuts a pass between the meseta and the river Ebro. A triple arch that may date from the time of Trajan remains visible from a considerable distance (fig. 12). It marks the old road into the Roman town and was built of ashlar blocks (*opus quadratum*). Fluted pilasters supporting pediments articulate each side, and an inscription originally ran across the top in bronze letters.¹⁰³ Its function, perhaps triumphal or territorial, remains unclear. Twenty kilometres north of Tarragona, another arch straddles the *Via Augusta*, known today as the Arc de Berà. It is an important part of the local landscape and was restored in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. The decoration recalls that of the arch at Medinaceli, with flat fluted pilasters and Corinthian pilaster capitals, so it was probably built by Trajan's friend, Lucius

96 Humphrey, 1986, 350-60.

97 Vega, 2009, 465-80.

98 Fraser, 2006, 111-27.

99 Keay, 1988, 137.

100 O'Connor, 1993, Fernández Casado, 2008, 99-122.

101 Edmondson, 1987, 58-70.

102 Ward-Perkins, 1994, 216-18.

103 Abascal, 2002.

Figure 11 San Pedro de Alcántara, bridge across the river Tagus



Figure 12 Medinaceli, triple arch



Licinus Sura, who came from the city, although some scholars argue for an Augustan date.¹⁰⁴ By the end of Trajan's reign the infrastructure of the peninsula was securely in place; it helped to determine use of the landscape for many centuries.

Trajan's cousin and adopted son, Hadrian, succeeded him as emperor in AD 117. Although his ancestors had settled in Baetica, specifically in Itálica close to the end of the *Via de la Plata*, Hadrian was born in Rome. Before he began his military and administrative career, he spent only some three years in Baetica. Once emperor, he followed Trajan's disinclination to travel to the peninsula, except for one visit to Tarragona. Hadrian ordered the repair of roads in Lusitania during the first ten years of his rule, probably including those that served the mines of Aljustrel, and in the second decade concentrated on the roads of the northwest. He also restored the Temple of Augustus at Tarragona at his own expense, and the seats and stage of the theatre at Mérida.¹⁰⁵ The construction of a new town at Itálica, which transformed it into a centre that was rivalled only by the provincial capitals, was the most extensive project undertaken during Hadrian's reign. The town was already wealthy, as the nearby mines of Aznalcóllar were still yielding valuable quantities of copper and silver.¹⁰⁶ The extent to which this development was driven by imperial patronage or by the desire of Hadrian's family and other local senators to associate themselves with Rome remains debatable. Hadrian granted the city *colonia* status and held its chief magistracy, but *in*

absentia.¹⁰⁷ Laid out on a green site, Italica's porticoed streets were built on a grid and lined with fine houses and large public buildings: a substantial amphitheatre, baths, and a gymnasium. A temple, known as the Traianeum, sat on a podium in the centre of the town and dominated it from every angle. Local and imported marbles worked together at Itálica. Some of the columns along the façade of the Traianeum were Portasanta marble from Chios, but the columns on the side porticoes, and the majority of the Corinthian capitals and pilasters, were carved in marble from the local Almadén de la Plata quarry or from Estremoz (Portugal); a small number were made from imported Luna marble.¹⁰⁸ Surviving fragments suggest that twenty statues once stood against the Traianeum depicting local magnates alongside Roman heroes, including Emperor Trajan.¹⁰⁹ The elite of Itálica rivalled the provincial capitals in their municipal and private buildings.¹¹⁰ By the third century, Itálica was in decline, which means that scholars have usually attributed its fine collection of mosaics and *opus sectile* pavements to the second century.¹¹¹ Although now known as houses, several of the buildings may have belonged to associations (*collegia*) and been semi-public. In the House of Neptune, a predominantly black and white mosaic features Neptune riding seahorses over a sea filled with hybrid creatures, dolphins, fish, and crustaceans. A wide border of Nilotic scenes surrounds this L-shaped panel where 'pygmies' hunt crocodiles, large birds, and a hippopotamus (fig. 13). The small touches of polychromy on Neptune are distinctive of peninsular mosaics from the second century

104 Dupré i Raventós, 1994, 23; Arrayás Morales, 2005, 123-24.

105 Fraser, 2006, 111, 118; Solana, 2006a, 35-86; Nogales, 2007, 115-18.

106 Hunt Ortiz, 2003, 1-14.

107 Syme, 1964, 142-49.

108 Rodà de Llanza, 1997, 155-80; Russell, 2013, 155-57.

109 Ojeda, 2010, 239-47.

110 Borg, 2004.

111 Beltrán Fortes, 2005, 61-88.

Figure 13 Itálica, House of Neptune, mosaic

onwards.¹¹² The design has been compared to a black and white mosaic in the Baths of Neptune at Ostia, Rome's harbour, although the floor at Itálica employs considerably more humour.¹¹³ In the private House of the Birds, which included shops either side of its main entrance, its eponymous mosaic presents a grid of small panels, each one carefully and accurately depicting a different bird.¹¹⁴ As Dunbabin has suggested, these squares may echo the decoration on coffered ceilings.¹¹⁵ The owner of the house was demonstrating a command of elite culture (*paideia*), shared by

those in Rome and the provinces alike. In this case it was the categorisation of knowledge, displayed elsewhere in Itálica in the House of the Planetarium, where another mosaic presents the planetary gods that denote days of the week in a hexagon pattern with Venus, the goddess of Friday, in the centre. *Paideia* encompassed all aspects of knowledge, not only astrological and other scientific learning, but mythology, history, and geography. Above all it was thought to deliver an essential education in rhetoric, grammar, and logic, which became the medieval *trivium* subjects.¹¹⁶ Recent work on Itálica has emphasised the likely existence of a number of *officinae*, 'workshops', that shared techniques and designs whilst working in the Guadalquivir valley on an almost industrial scale during the third quarter of the second century.¹¹⁷ They drew on Italian models and also had clear links with North African mosaicists whose work can be found at El Djem (Thysdrus), a connection that is strengthened by epigraphic comparisons and evidence for the olive oil trade.¹¹⁸

Mosaic designs criss-cross the peninsula in an uneven fashion during this period. Frames that surround a labyrinth mosaic in one of the houses at Conimbriga and a fragmentary floor from Pamplona in Navarre both depict walls with intermediate towers. Large polychrome mosaics of Orpheus from the late second century have been excavated in both Mérida and far to the northeast at Zaragoza. In two provincial capitals, Tarragona and Córdoba, Medusa heads have survived from central mosaic panels. Such similarities raise questions about the means of transmission, about travelling craftsmen, and the possible use of pattern- or copybooks.

112 Dunbabin, 1999, 146-47.

113 Mañas, 2011, 638.

114 Mañas, 2010, 54-56.

115 Dunbabin, 1999, 75.

116 Elsner, 1998, 105-106; Borg, 2004.

117 Mañas, 2010, 139-41.

118 Mañas, 2010, 61-64, 140-41; Mañas, 2011, 635-41; Dunbabin, 1999, 150-51.

Although it is accepted that some analogues can be explained by a master and apprentice system and by mosaicists migrating, it remains possible that craftsmen made sketches and sometimes compiled them into books. No copybooks have survived from antiquity, but this does not rule out their existence, as they would have been made of perishable materials and much used.¹¹⁹ In the city of Mérida in the late second or third century, a mosaicist, perhaps from Syria, made a remarkable floor for a large town house (*domus*) known as 'House of the Mithraeum'.¹²⁰ It is an import without precedent or legacy in the peninsula. A cosmological mosaic that depicts the earth, sea, and heavens through a series of highly accomplished personifications, this piece is naturalistic and dynamic with a marked

sense of perspective (fig. 14). Originally the small tesserae, many of blue and green glass, and perhaps gold, would have made the mosaic glitter, whilst the flesh-coloured local marbles moulded the bodies. The mosaicist probably took a boat home as soon as the commission was finished, as no other similar work has been found in the peninsula, although the local craftsmen who worked on the border may have acquired some of his expertise. We know very little about the status or movement of craftsmen who worked in Hispania. Peter Stewart's study of the social history of art in Rome found that many craftsmen were slaves or freedmen, often with Greek-sounding names but not necessarily Greek in origin.¹²¹ Records in Hispania show slaves working in stone, iron, wood, and textiles, although the majority were

Figure 14 Mérida, House of the Mithraeum, cosmological mosaic



119 Dunbabin, 1999, 302-303.

120 Dunbabin, 1999, 147-50.

121 Stewart, 2008, 14-32.

domestic or agricultural labourers.¹²² Above all it would be useful to have information on the movement of craftsmen across the peninsula. Although we lack that evidence, another example that illuminates the status and training of doctors during the mid-first century AD provides a model that could also have worked for artisans. An inscription – only recently published – was set up by a medical student from Lisbon, called Nothus, in honour of his teacher in Mérida; both were slaves.¹²³ Later Nothus was manumitted and went on to participate in the erection of a statue to his former master, a freedman from Lisbon, who had a Greek-sounding name, C. Heius Primus, and had risen to be an official of the imperial cult. In that capacity he had funded repairs and sculpture (*cum ornamentis*) for the theatre at Lisbon, as well as presumably Nothus's training in Mérida, some 250 km away. He may also have sought trained craftsmen from Mérida to work on the theatre in Lisbon, or sent other slaves for training in stone-cutting, although, as manual workers (*banauoi*), it would have been more difficult for them to advance socially. Another inscription, this time from Tarragona and dated to the second or third century AD, may record the journey of a goldsmith and his apprentice from as far away as Pannonia.¹²⁴ Patrons would have been able to travel independently much more easily than craftsmen, and many had widespread social networks through which they could have acquired artistic ideas and artisans.

The majority of statues found in Itálica were imported, and many were exceptionally fine

pieces.¹²⁵ The majority of statues in the provincial capitals probably also came from Rome, although Koppel and Rodà maintain that some portrait statues were executed in Tarragona for use there and in Zaragoza. In Mérida, locally produced portrait sculpture was applied to funerary stelae in the city and probably made for the nearby colony of Medellín.¹²⁶ Although they employ many Roman conventions, including arched frames, inscriptions, and individualised figures, these sculptures could not be mistaken for imports from Rome and would usually be labelled 'provincial'.¹²⁷ Many other carvings have been included in this broad category, in particular funerary stelae, produced above all but not exclusively in the northwest of the peninsula, within a wide arc from the Bay of Biscay to Lisbon. These gravestones are decorated with rosettes, stars, crescents, and other geometric designs alongside inscriptions. The motifs and the distribution have led some scholars to see the pieces as 'Celtic' or 'Iberian', but, as Abásolo has argued, they are essentially 'Roman' and the distribution reflects military presence as much as any 'Celtic' ancestry.¹²⁸ As in other provinces, many of these stelae seem to have been commissioned for soldiers, particularly for cavalrymen: for example, a discoidal stone from León set up to Lucius Campilius Paternus by his freedman (fig. 15).¹²⁹ This social relationship is typical of such commissions, where the freedmen simultaneously acknowledged previous masters and rose in society.

122 For regional studies of slaves, see García Martínez, 197-98; Mangas Manjarrés, 1971; Curchin, 1987, 75-89.

123 Edmondson, 2009, 117-29.

124 Haley, 1991, 37-38; Pannonia included much of modern Hungary, E. Austria, Croatia, NW Serbia, Slovenia, W. Slovakia, Northern Bosnia, and Herzegovina.

125 Rodríguez Oliva, 2009, 82-89; Jiménez, 2015, 497-98.

126 Edmondson, 2011, 43-44.

127 Stewart, 2010, 11.

128 Abásolo, 1993, 181-93.

129 Stewart, 2010, 26; Grau Lobo, 2007, 88-90.

Figure 15 León, funerary stele (Museo de León)

Sarcophagi

Over the second and third centuries, a growing trend towards burial and away from cremation led to a demand for sarcophagi. Whilst the majority in Hispania were plain and made from local stone, several were imported from Rome, and it is these which were most prized in the early Middle Ages.¹³⁰ To judge from surviving examples and fragmentary finds, the distribution of these imports was very uneven.¹³¹ The largest number has been found along the north-east coast, around Tarragona, and a few further south in the coastal town of Cartagena. In Baetica, imported sarcophagi are concentrated in Córdoba by the Guadalquivir.¹³² In Lusitania, the capital at Mérida on the river Guadiana has so far yielded only a few fragments, whereas two complete sarcophagi have been found close to Lisbon on the coast, as well as some fragments and a similar number at Évora (Portugal) further inland.¹³³ Fragmentary sarcophagi continue to surface in archaeological excavations, which alter the figures but not the general distribution. It is immediately clear that the distribution was at least partly determined by the ease or difficulty of transportation. There is, for example, a noticeable lack of imported sculpted sarcophagi in the northwest and in the centre of the peninsula where transport would have been more problematic. Sarcophagi could be moved overland, and, in addition to the group from Évora, four have been found inland, at Husillos and Covarrubias north of the Duero, and at Huesca and Àger north of the Ebro. As all were moved in the Middle Ages, these locations may say more about the value of the sarcophagi in later periods.

¹³⁰ Russell, 2013, 176.

¹³¹ Clavería, 2007, 197-204; Russell, 2013, 176-77.

¹³² Beltrán Fortes, 2006, 72-92.

¹³³ Fernández Díaz, 2001, 79-87.

The total number of imported sarcophagi found in Hispania is relatively small, more than in northern Gaul or Britain but significantly below the number found in the East.¹³⁴ Even so the variety of sarcophagi found in Hispania reflected stylistic developments in Rome, and reinforces the idea that certain provincial elites were closely in touch with metropolitan fashions. An example from the second century, a sarcophagus that depicts Hades and Persephone, is mounted in the presbytery of the church of Sant Feliu in Girona (fig. 16).¹³⁵ Probably from the later part of the century, this design focuses on the figure of Persephone, framing her with a veil and relegating the gods to the background.¹³⁶ Another sarcophagus with a mythological subject, from the middle

of the second century, was found in the centre of the peninsula at Husillos, north of Palencia (*Pallantia*), in a church where it had probably been reused for burial (fig. 17). It depicts the Greek myth of the *Oresteia*: Orestes killing his mother Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in revenge for their murder of his father Agamemnon. The Furies that pursue him play a major role in the design, and the whole is finely worked with extravagant scenes of murder and mourning. An Attic Hippolytus sarcophagus was discovered in a shipwreck off the coast of Tarragona, but its destination is not known.¹³⁷ Most sarcophagi were originally displayed in tomb buildings, erected in cemeteries, along roads or on villa estates.¹³⁸ Funerary monuments in Hispania are concentrated in Baetica

Figure 16 Girona, Sant Feliu, Hades and Persephone sarcophagus



¹³⁴ Russell, 2013, 176-78.

¹³⁵ Clavería, 2001, 34-5; Prats, 2001, 253-68.

¹³⁶ Borg, 2013, 164-67.

¹³⁷ Arata, 2005, 197: the piece was damaged before the shipwreck, so the ship may not be Roman; Russell, 2012, 536; Russell, 2013, 284.

¹³⁸ Borg, 2013, 212-42.

Figure 17 Husillos, Orestes sarcophagus (Museo Arqueológico Nacional)

and around Tarragona.¹³⁹ The best-preserved temple tomb in the peninsula was constructed on the banks of the river Matarraña, at Fabara, southeast of Zaragoza.¹⁴⁰ As this was a rural site some distance from a substantial town, it probably belonged to a villa estate (fig. 18). The small structure (7.4 x 6.06m) was built in ashlar blocks towards the end of the second century for a Lucius Aemilius Lupus by his parents. It has the form of a temple with a room above a crypt, both barrel-vaulted. The façade has four Tuscan columns on a plinth under a pediment; the entablature is Ionic and the architrave frieze bears relief carving with garlands and eagles, which reflect the seasons of life. Although some rough sarcophagi remain

on the site, it is unclear if the temple tomb held the ashes or the bodies of the family.

In the third century there are fewer narrative sarcophagi, and Dionysiac and bucolic scenes predominate, perhaps intended to evoke the delights of the Elysian Fields.¹⁴¹ Two of the inland examples belong to this group, including the sarcophagus now in the church at Sant Vicenç in Àger (Lleida), where a dynamic marine *thiasos* surrounds a bust of the deceased in a medallion (*clipeus*).¹⁴² The portrait bust is damaged but was probably female, although the sarcophagus is likely to have received multiple burials, couples, siblings, or families.¹⁴³ At Covarrubias, the sarcophagus exemplifies the popular Good Shepherd theme, developed

¹³⁹ Cancela, 1993, 239–42, 255.

¹⁴⁰ Cancela, 1993, 242–44.

¹⁴¹ Borg, 2013, 199–202.

¹⁴² Clavería, 2001, 34 and pl. 7.

¹⁴³ Borg, 2013, 202–209.

Figure 18 Fabara, temple tomb

from the myth of Endymion. Here the central *clipeus* depicts a couple that presumably shared the sarcophagus. To the left, a shepherd guards his flock with the assistance of a small figure milking one of the sheep. To the right, a shepherd faces two sheep on a raised branch, while a small turbaned figure makes cheese or butter on a table (fig. 19).¹⁴⁴ The sarcophagus at Huesca is more formal, and is traditionally associated with the burial of a medieval king of Aragón. Here the *clipeus* is held aloft by two winged victories, whilst Gaia and a sea-god, probably Neptune, either side of a cornucopia, fill the lower section (fig. 20). Carved of Proconnesian marble from Marmora, the sarcophagus now has a brownish hue caused by the later

application of coloured wax.¹⁴⁵ The *clipeus* embodied ideas of victory and glory, derived from a military context, which transferred to a more general encomium of the deceased, whereas the sea and earth gods promised peace and fertility.¹⁴⁶ A very different kind of sarcophagus was imported to the southeast and to Córdoba; two examples are now reused as friezes in the cathedral of Murcia and fragments of a third have been found at the Islamic city of Madīnat al-Zahrā outside Córdoba. In Murcia, the nine Muses occupy the front of the sarcophagus, holding masks, scrolls, and other attributes. The style of these sarcophagi is typical of sculpture from the Severan period (AD 193-235) and exhibits dramatic frontal poses as well as deeply

144 Rodríguez Oliva, 2001, 108-12.

145 Hernández Vera, 1981, 353-362; Lapuente, 2012, 419-25.

146 Borg, 2013, 210.

Figure 19 Covarrubias, Good Shepherd sarcophagus from San Pedro de Arlanza (Colegiata de San Cosme y San Damián)



drilled hair, beards, and masks.¹⁴⁷ In Córdoba the Muses are represented by only three of their number but are accompanied by philosophers and, perhaps, the deceased; this sarcophagus, in Proconnesian marble, is exceptionally large with almost life-size figures and probably dates from AD 270-280.¹⁴⁸ In both cases they present the deceased as cultured with an interest in all kinds of Greek learning (*paideia*).¹⁴⁹ Another later and more provincial example from Lisbon shows an imperial official, dressed

147 Huskinson, 2005, 678-80.

148 Calvo, 2012, 142-43.

149 Clavería, 2001, 33-34; Noguera, 2001, 175-255; Borg, 2013, 192-97.

in trousers and a cloak fixed with a fibula, similarly surrounded by Muses.¹⁵⁰ Córdoba provides examples of two other third-century sarcophagus types. Several fragments of a sarcophagus in Thasian marble from Madinat al-Zahrā have a mythological theme and depict Meleager hunting the boar of Calydon.¹⁵¹ The arrangement of figures that manipulates the narrative to place Meleager at the centre suggests an early or mid-third century date.¹⁵² The idea of the temple tomb was merged with the theme of the Muse sarcophagus to invent another form, the 'Door of Hades' sarcophagus. Two examples of this type have been found in Córdoba, a complete sarcophagus in the town (fig. 21) and fragments at Madinat al-Zahrā; both date to the late third century and are of Parian marble.¹⁵³

In common with Rome, Hispania had no explicitly Christian sarcophagi in this period. A textual record, however, attests to Christian activity, and indeed persecution, in the peninsula. The bishop of Tarragona, Fructuosus, and his two deacons were martyred in the amphitheatre during the persecutions of Emperor Valerian in AD 259 (fig. 18). According to the contemporary text, the Acts of Fructuosus (*Acta Fructuosi*), the bishop was dragged from his house in the night.¹⁵⁴ Despite his title, Fructuosus's position probably had more in common with that of a parish priest, and worship took place in houses. Nothing is known of his background but it is likely that it was reasonably wealthy. After a brief trial, the bishop and his two deacons were burnt in the

150 Brown, 2012, 206-207; Matos, 2005, 239.

151 Calvo, 2012, 141-42.

152 Borg, 2013, 172-75.

153 García y Bellido, 1959, 3-37; Calvo, 2012, 140-41; Beltrán Fortes, 2001, 96-97.

154 Musurillo, 1972, 176-84; Godoy, 1995b, 251-62; Valdez del Álamo, 2013, 143-46.

Figure 20 Huesca, San Pedro el Viejo, sarcophagus "of Ramiro II"



Figure 21 Córdoba (Alcázar), 'Door of Hades' sarcophagus



Figure 22 Tarragona, Roman amphitheatre

amphitheatre (fig. 22), and the *Acta* looked to the Old Testament story of the ‘Three Hebrews and the Fiery Furnace’ as an antitype (Dan. 3: 21-25). The biblical precedent could scarcely have been more appropriate given the number of the martyrs and the means of their death.

Emperor Diocletian’s Reorganisation

Much scholarship on the third century has been concerned with ideas of crisis and decline, but this view has been called into question by Michael Kulikowski.¹⁵⁵ The evidence provided by sarcophagi helps to reinforce his position. Even so, as Kulikowski admits, public building and artistic activity did decline in comparison with its heyday in the early second

century, albeit with exceptions.¹⁵⁶ From AD 293 Emperor Diocletian instituted a system of government known as the tetrarchy, and three other *Augusti* shared the throne with him under his leadership. Maximian had special responsibility for the western part of the Empire. As part of this wider reorganisation to promote security, Diocletian (r. 284-305) redrew the map of Hispania and created six provinces. Two in the south were largely unchanged: Lusitania with its capital at Mérida, and Baetica with its capital at Córdoba. The previously vast province of Tarraconensis was divided into three, leaving a considerably reduced new Tarraconensis with its capital at Tarragona; a new province of Gallaecia in the northwest with its capital at Braga; and the province of Carthaginiensis, its capital at

¹⁵⁵ Drinkwater, 2005, 28-66; Kulikowski, 2004, 39-64.

¹⁵⁶ Kulikowski, 2004, 149, 225.

Cartagena, in the southeast. The sixth province, Mauretania Tingitana, straddled the Straits of Gibraltar; its capital was Tangiers (*Tingi*). Together they formed the new diocese of Hispania now administered under a *vicarius* resident in Mérida, and under the military command of a *dux*.¹⁵⁷ This was perhaps the culmination of a preoccupation with the west of the peninsula that had been apparent from the time of Trajan a hundred years earlier. With its strategic location on the *Via de la Plata*, Mérida controlled the arterial route from the north to the Straits of Gibraltar. From the southern coast it was a short sea voyage to Tangiers.¹⁵⁸ The road tied the peninsula conceptually and administratively to North Africa, recognising close trading links and military imperatives. This administrative reorganisation may also have been partly responsible for the construction of city walls across Hispania between c. AD 300 and the fifth century. Many of these walls survived to protect the medieval cities that occupied them, notably in the northwest, at Braga, Lugo, Astorga, and León. The purpose of these walls is a matter of dispute.¹⁵⁹ Some scholars have speculated that they protected a supply route for troops on the frontiers of the Roman Empire (*annona*) originating in North Africa, but there is so far insufficient evidence. This would not explain, for example, the reconstruction of the walls around Zaragoza, or Gerona and Barcelona on the northeast coast, each of which was attempting to establish its place in the urban hierarchy at this period. Given the extensive materials and labour required to build them, the walls seem extreme

as mere status markers, and suggest at least a general desire for enclosure over this period.

Around AD 300 the city of Córdoba was reoriented by a major new structure outside the walls, Cercadilla. This has been the subject of a major archaeological excavation since its discovery, when work began in the mid-1990s on a new station at Córdoba for high-speed trains.¹⁶⁰ The residential structure, described as a palace (*palatium*) by its excavators, dominated the western approach to the city but was accessible only from the side that faced the city. Its design was highly unusual, and every aspect was crafted to impress. The wide entrance road that led to the main buildings was lined with small square rooms that have been interpreted as barracks, whilst the apartments of the main complex were arranged around a semi-circular courtyard so that they radiated from it, like spokes from a wheel. A large apsed reception hall, as well as a substantial baths and a covered gallery (*cryptoporticus*), indicate that it was built for someone of high rank, and the excavators have suggested imperial patronage under Maximian.¹⁶¹ The building's function is unrecorded, and there has been much speculation, but it seems plausible, as Michael Kulikowski has proposed, that it was an administrative base for the governor of Baetica.¹⁶² Alternatively, it could have accommodated the military commander, the *dux*, whose power would outstrip that of the *vicarius* of Hispania by the fourth century.¹⁶³ The complex survived at least into the sixth century, but was plundered for building material in the tenth. During the fourth century building designs of similar

157 Kulikowski, 2004, 71-84; Wilkes, 2005, 705-13; some claim that the new centre was Seville, but see Arce, 2003, 85-114.

158 For trade across the Straits in olive oil and fish sauces, see Ponsich, 1988.

159 Portass, 2010, 111-38.

160 Kulikowski, 2004, 116-19; Fuertes, 2005, 31-37.

161 Hidalgo, 1994, 40-51; Marfil, 2010-2011, 241-52; Haley, 1994, 208-14.

162 Arce, 1997, 293-302; Bowes, 2005a, 19-20; Kulikowski, 2004, 116-20.

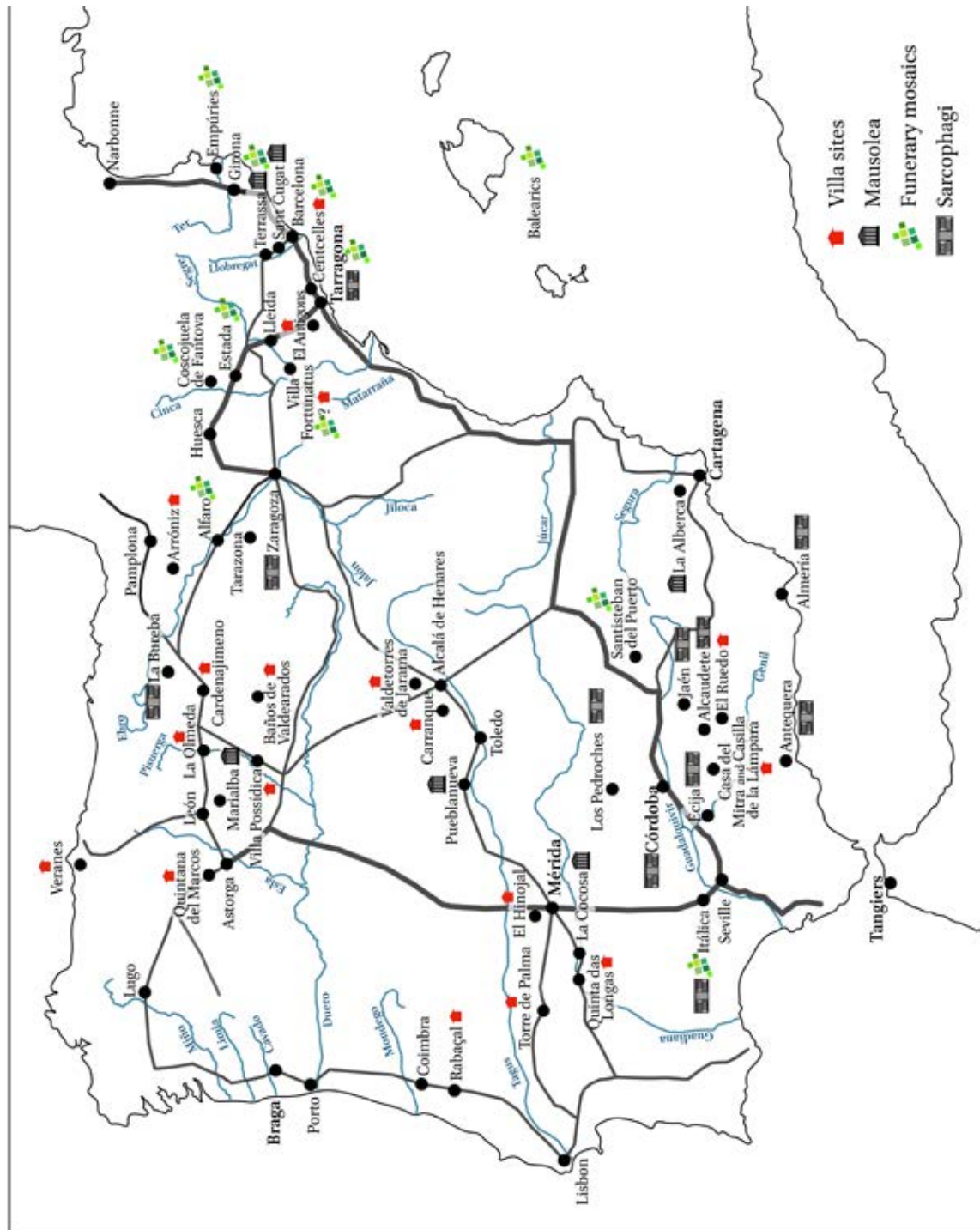
163 Villaverde, 2001, 265-85.

complexity were to unfurl across much of the Iberian countryside.

This chapter has set out the infrastructure that was built across the peninsula over the first five hundred years of Roman rule. Its physical expression, the roads, bridges, aqueducts, and the quarried stones had afterlives that are important for this book. Likewise the patterns of political organisation, trade, and industrial development established over this period were to have long-lasting effects. Shared visual languages are apparent across these networks, ones that communicated closely with other regions of the Roman Republic and Empire. In this they paralleled the use of the Latin language inscribed on public buildings, on funerary monuments, and on milestones along the roads. Patrons in Hispania, of all levels, increasingly responded not to any indigenous substrate but to connections across the Empire. The provincial capitals, Tarragona, Mérida and Córdoba, commissioned the most obviously 'Roman' art and architecture, which included work by visiting craftsmen as well as statues and sarcophagi imported from Rome. As copies of these imports also survived in Rome and elsewhere outside the peninsula, they would continue to act as visible cultural links long into the future. Local elites in other towns employed artists to create illusionistic wall

paintings or to lay black and white mosaic pavements in the Roman manner, but they chose to enliven the former with an array of motifs and the latter with the occasional polychrome figures. Their taste, now categorized as provincial, was nonetheless aspirational. Local stone could offer a measure of regional identity, but it was sometimes clad in foreign marbles or covered in stucco. This diverse use of materials could be seen as a metaphor for Rome's relationship with the peninsula: occasional focused injections of imperial ideology were set in a larger arena of more complex interaction with its peoples and landscapes. Even such an evocative town as Tiermes, with its distinctive landscape and indigenous tradition, purchased luxury objects from distant parts of the Empire. The Roman army provided other levels of connectivity, through the technical expertise that it employed across the Empire, and also through its men, who were drawn from different provinces and social groups. Highly decorated funerary monuments, both figurative and geometric, often erected by freedmen, provided work for local sculptors but the pieces would not have been out of place in other western provinces. Many of the works were recognisably 'provincial' before they were 'Hispanic'. These layered networks criss-crossed the peninsula and tied it into the rest of the Roman Empire.

Map III Map of Late Antique Hispania



2 Believing and Belonging

Late Antiquity and the Wider Mediterranean

Theodosius I – a Spanish emperor?

From AD 379 to the middle of the fifth century a Spanish dynasty ran the Roman Empire. These emperors ruled from Constantinople, the new capital in the East established c. 330 by Emperor Constantine,¹ and there is little to show that they took any special interest in the country of their origin.² Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379-395) had an estate at Cauca (Coca), roughly midway between Segovia and Valladolid, but he had spent his formative years on campaign with his father, also called Theodosius, who was one of the previous emperor's most successful generals. Consequently, as Neil McLynn has suggested, Theodosius I experienced something closer to mentoring instead of an education in rhetoric, which meant that he remained 'a consumer of *paideia* rather than an exponent'.³ When he became emperor, Theodosius was the first to occupy the position as a baptized Christian, which is perhaps why he was more emphatic in his Christian stance than his predecessors and never assumed the old imperial office of Pontifex Maximus with all its pagan trappings.⁴ The emperor's public persona was crafted in part by the orator and philosopher, Themistius, who had served four previous emperors. A pagan, imbued with *paideia*, Themistius operated as palace panegyrist and used the re-worked principles of Homer and Neo-Platonism to present the Christian

emperor as a 'philosopher-king'.⁵ Themistius was more than qualified to operate across the intellectual landscape that accommodated Christianity alongside the rhetoric, classical philosophy, literature, and art of *paideia*. Only professional Christian thinkers occasionally questioned that co-existence, and even then often acceded to it.⁶ This subtle negotiation was reflected visually across the empire, through a preference for pagan subjects that were capable of a Christian interpretation.⁷

At the heart of the empire, visual silence was an important tactic, and Theodosius consistently projected a traditional image with no reference to his Christianity, whilst acting to promote his religion at the expense of paganism. In AD 393, towards the end of his reign, Theodosius built a forum in Constantinople that included not only a basilica but also a column and a triumphal arch, clearly referencing Trajan's forum in Rome. This allusion to his Spanish relative was not typical, and Themistius's speeches tended to dilute such connections, perhaps wary of a comparison with Trajan's military success.⁸ Indeed the Emperor brought few of his compatriots to the court. Theodosius's uncle, Eucherius, had been Emperor Gratian's (r. 375-383) finance minister (*comes sacrarum largitionum*) in charge of coinage and the distribution of other gifts in precious metals, and became Theodosius's consul in 381. Another Spaniard, Florus, was

1 Lowden, 1997, 33; Elsner, 1998, 73-76.

2 McLynn, 2005, 77-120.

3 McLynn, 2005, 103.

4 McLynn, 2005, 105.

5 McLynn, 2005, 98-99; Heather, 2001, 199-298.

6 Heather, 2001, 209-10; Stirling, 2005, 144.

7 Heather, 2001, 57-68.

8 McLynn, 2005, 99.

praetorian prefect, and a few women were brought from Spain to make advantageous marriages.⁹ In general, Theodosius's relatives stayed in Hispania, where nevertheless they were not detached from the events and tastes of Constantinople.

The elites of Hispania participated in an empire-wide culture through a network of social and political connections. This was based on the persistence and re-invention of *paideia*, which remained a hallmark of status in late antiquity for pagans and Christians alike.¹⁰ Over this period the consumption of art in the peninsula focused on domestic and semi-public buildings. As in other provinces, the main areas for competitive display were those that were open to visitors of similar rank, for receptions, for dining, for bathing, and in some cases for official business.¹¹ Ruth Leader-Newby used *paideia* as an interpretative tool to interrogate silverware in the late antique period, Lea Stirling applied the methodology to mythological statuettes in late antique Gaul, and it may be equally useful in considering the art of Hispania.¹² Whilst the classical heritage of *paideia* was a shared language, different elite groups may have drawn on it in ways that reflected their diverse roles in society. From the time of Diocletian and Constantine, the number of officials, governors and their staff, senators, tax collectors, and 'middling' landowners increased, and so did the number of town houses in centres like Mérida.¹³ Kim Bowes has suggested that a concentration of villas, in some country regions, may indicate connections with imperial administration, and an eclectic mix of local landowners, the

military elite, and tax bureaucrats.¹⁴ Indeed decorative programme themes that might have appealed to a military elite seem to be popular in Hispania, especially in some of the richest villas. This was the sub-group that had produced Emperor Theodosius, and its mediated relationship with *paideia* may be pertinent here.¹⁵

A silver object forms the only clear physical connection between Emperor Theodosius and Hispania. The most valuable piece of Roman treasure in Hispania was found only 11 kilometres outside Mérida. This silver plate, known as the *Missorium* of Theodosius, is the heaviest and most elaborate official commemorative gift (*largitio*) to have survived, albeit in a damaged state.¹⁶ Such plates were commemorative objects distributed to civilian or military officials, in this case to celebrate the tenth anniversary, in 388, of the accession of Emperor Theodosius. Presumably sent to the governor of Hispania, the plate would also have functioned as a means of holding wealth and may have been kept in a display cupboard or *armarium*.¹⁷ The *missorium* shows the emperor enthroned under a pedimented arch. His co-emperors, his brother-in-law, Valentinian II, and his son, Arcadius, sit between the fluted columns on each side, and all three are flanked by Germanic soldiers, denoted by their hairstyle, shields, and torques. The relative status of the figures is demonstrated by their size: the emperor overshadows all the other figures, and the official who receives his highly symbolic documents of appointment (*codicilli*) in veiled hands is much smaller than the other nimbed imperial figures. The details of the insignia, silk

9 Errington, 2006, 28-29; McLynn, 2005, 95-100.

10 Brown, 1992, 35-41; Stirling, 2005, 10-11.

11 Scott, 2000, 126-28; Bowes, 2010.

12 Leader-Newby, 2004.

13 Bowes, 2010, 64-76.

14 Bowes, 2010, 90-95.

15 Brown, 2000, 333.

16 Leader-Newby, 2004, 11-14 and 27-39.

17 Leader-Newby, 2004, 15; Wood, 2000, 308-10; Eastmond, 2010, 759.

and embroidered garments, shoulder brooches, and diadems of pearls were highlighted with punching, chasing, and gilding, to convey the status and wealth of the giver.¹⁸ Each face is carefully and individually moulded, although the imperial features may not be accurate portraits. Below the official scene, in a separate section, a reclining female figure personifies Earth (*Tellus*) and symbolises the renewal of peace and prosperity, looking back to the iconography employed by Emperor Augustus. *Putti* offer her fruits of the earth with veiled hands mirroring those of the official above. Roman art had always been eclectic, and from the second century onwards into the fifth became increasingly self-referential.¹⁹ The *missorium* combines the naturalism of perspective and moulded bodies with a hieratic imperial image that expresses the emperor's command of his classical legacy, of both its learning (*paideia*) and its political authority. The formal frontal figures also suggest divinity, or at least mediation between the world and the divine sphere.²⁰ There is no explicit visual statement of Theodosius's Christianity in this piece, and indeed it would have suited a recipient who adhered to the imperial cult.²¹ The arrival of the *missorium* in Mérida was also proof of the continued importance of social and political connections across the wider Mediterranean.

Urban Repair and Renewal

The idea that in the fourth century the elites abandoned the cities for their country villas has been thoroughly overturned by a reassessment

of the archaeological evidence by Michael Kulikowski.²² Mérida, the capital of Hispania on the *Via de la Plata*, presents strong arguments for flourishing urban life in the fourth and into the fifth centuries, as well as continuing devotion to the emperor.²³ Its new status led to the restoration of two major public buildings: the theatre between 333 and 335 and the circus between 337 and 340. The colonnaded gallery in the circus was repaired and given new sculpture with 'decorative waters'.²⁴ Dedicatory inscriptions say that the circus restoration was ordered by the *comes Hispaniarum*, Tiberius Flavius Laetus, to correct the 'ravages of years' and to celebrate 'a new age flowering under the happy rule of the victorious Emperors Constantine [II, 337-340], Constans [337-350] and Constantius [II, 337-361]', yet another invocation of stable and prosperous rule. The city of Tarragona, on the *via Augusta*, had continued to honour the imperial cult, and in the third century the governor, Iulius Valens, had a colonnade constructed along one side of the basilica in the name of the pagan emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Excavations have found that this prominent upper part of the city, with its temples, circus, and forum, was well maintained into the fifth century.²⁵ With help from the emperor, Constantine I (306-337), the imperial officials also restored the other visually spectacular building by the sea, the amphitheatre. Although Constantine had generously funded churches in Rome, there is no evidence for such sponsorship of Christian building in Hispania. The practice of setting up statues to emperors, and to other officials, seems to have continued into the late antique period, and Constantius II was thus honoured,

18 Kiilerich, 2000, 273-80; Kelly, 2004, 19-22.

19 Elsner, 1998, 15.

20 Leader-Newby, 2004, 34-36; Elsner, 1995, 173-76.

21 Leader-Newby, 2004, 33; Grabar, 1969, fig. 2 and fig. 29.

22 Kulikowski, 2004.

23 Kulikowski, 2004, 75.

24 Kulikowski, 2004, 111.

25 Kulikowski, 2004, 113-14.

for example, in Tarragona, Seville, and Córdoba.²⁶ The last official to have been accorded a statue in Barcelona may have been Nummius Aemilianus Dexter in his capacity as Proconsul of Asia (western Turkey) in the 380s.²⁷ If he is the man of the same name who was the son of Bishop Pacian of Barcelona, an author in his own right, and the dedicatee of St. Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, his career may exemplify the success of some Hispanic families in the late fourth century. He was also controller of Emperor Theodosius's private finances (*comes rerum privatarum*) in Constantinople, and by 395 praetorian prefect of Italy.²⁸ Yet affluence was not found in all parts of the cities. In the mid-fourth century, the old colonial area of Tarragona, near the port, including the theatre, began to be abandoned or used for housing. The deterioration in this area continued, and by the middle of the fifth century the marble slabs that had paved the lower forum had been removed and recycled.²⁹ This type of sharply divergent picture, which involved a reconfiguration of urban space, was a typical feature in many cities at this time. A similar dichotomy has been identified in Zaragoza, the *conventus* capital. The Tiberian façade of its forum was maintained until the mid-fifth-century,³⁰ and games were still held in the circus as late as AD 492, but beneath the commercial life and entertainment the main sewers had been silted up for a century.

The circus was one of the privileged areas, not only at Tarragona and Zaragoza, but also

at Mérida.³¹ As in the Hippodrome at Constantinople, these sites were not only centres of entertainment but also the focus of social display and sponsorship at the highest level. One of the best-known accounts of this can be found in the letters of Symmachus, a Roman aristocrat from Gaul, promoted by Theodosius. When he was arranging games to celebrate the quaestorship of his son in 393, Symmachus called in many favours, including Spanish chariot horses for the racing from his friend Sallustius.³² Spain produced some of the finest racing horses, and their victories can be seen on fourth-century mosaics in town houses or suburban villas in Mérida, Gerona, and Barcelona. Some of these mosaics record the thrill of the race, whereas others frame victorious horses and charioteers. Both the Gerona and Barcelona mosaics are particularly dynamic. They depict four-horse chariot races taking place in the Circus Maximus in Rome, not in Hispania. The Gerona mosaic features a dramatic crash, and both use a fine technique to convey the speed, strength, and tension of the races, rivalling the most comprehensive surviving example of a race in progress from the villa at Piazza Armerina in Sicily.³³ Mosaics were often customized for their purchasers, and both Catalan examples give the names and stables of the horses.³⁴ The Barcelona mosaic came from an area of private houses (*domus*), within the walls of the city, from a house that probably belonged to a leading member of the community.³⁵ The Gerona mosaic (fig. 23), on the other hand, was found in a suburban villa, Can Pau Birol, outside the new walls and three

26 Keay, 1988, 184; Fishwick, 2004, 100; see also Lavan, 2011, 439–78.

27 Kulikowski, 2004, 49 and 331.

28 Chavarría, 2005, 542.

29 For the skill and expense required in the salvage and reuse of marble during the Roman period, see Barker, 2012, 22–30.

30 Kulikowski, 2004, 124–27.

31 Humphrey, 1986, 376.

32 Wood, 2000, 307.

33 Dunbabin, 1982, 66.

34 Dunbabin, 1999, 320; the Gerona mosaic records the name of its maker, *Cecilius*.

35 Arce, 2007b, 305–336.

Figure 23 Gerona, circus mosaic from the villa of Can Paul Pirol (Museu d'Història de la Ciutat, Girona)



kilometres from the centre; it was presumably the residence of someone of similar rank and interests.³⁶

During the fourth century in Mérida new luxurious houses were built in an area recently excavated, now known as the Morería. They boasted marble peristyles and floors, private baths, and frescoes on the walls.³⁷ Other town houses had fine mosaics, including a *domus* in calle Arzobispo Massona, where the mosaic depicts two named charioteers, Marcianus and Paulus, in square panels surrounded by lush scrolls and cornucopia. Unlike the Catalan examples, these charioteers are depicted frontally in triumphal pose with their four-horse chariots (*aurigae*) and named horses.³⁸ Similar examples

have been found from Trier in Germany to Dougga in Tunisia, another source of fine racing horses, and in each case they were customised to reflect local success. The sponsorship of such events, including the provision of the winning horses, greatly enhanced the status of magistrates, associating them not only with other aristocrats, like the orator Symmachus, but also with the emperor himself. In the centre of the Hippodrome in Constantinople, Theodosius and his court were sculpted on a large base that supported an Egyptian obelisk, dedicated in 390. The emperor's party are shown occupying the imperial balcony with Germanic guards, whilst below them are spectators, musicians, and dancers, or tributary peoples bringing gifts. On a lower base two inscriptions alternate with scenes from the chariot racing.³⁹

³⁶ Guardia, 1999b, 154-56.

³⁷ Arce, 2007b, 309-313.

³⁸ Dunbabin, 1999, 320; and Dunbabin, 1982, 65-89.

³⁹ Safran, 1993, 409-35; Elsner, 1998, 78.

Christianity becomes Visible

In contrast to the celebration of chariot racing, Christianity is almost archaeologically invisible in Mérida before the end of the fourth century. A glimpse of the religion comes from a painting of a garlanded chrismon found in 2009 in an underground room on the *decumanus*; it may date from the end of the third century.⁴⁰ It had always been too difficult to transport marble sarcophagi from Rome up the Guadiana in any significant number, and that did not change in the Constantinian period or later in the century.⁴¹ The other areas that had been able to import pagan sarcophagi, especially the northeast coast and the Guadalquivir valley, now also purchased Christian models.⁴² The display of surviving examples raises questions about visibility and location. A group of eight sculpted sarcophagi were inserted into the interior walls of the presbytery at the church of Sant Feliu in Gerona. This church was built between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries, and indeed a date for this arrangement towards the end of that period is plausible given liturgical reuse of early Christian sarcophagi in Provence around the same time.⁴³ Palol argued that they came from a cemetery around a *martyrium* for St. Felix, but there is no archaeological evidence to support this assertion, and in the sixth century Gregory of Tours mentioned relics of this St. Felix only in Narbonne.⁴⁴ They may not even have been used originally in Gerona, but could have come from Empúries, or other sites on the coast. Four of the sarcophagi are explicitly Christian pieces, from the first decades of the fourth century, and present scenes as a

continuous frieze. They are mounted with four other sarcophagi, a fourth-century lion hunt sarcophagus, the sarcophagus of Persephone considered in Chapter 1, and two strigillated sarcophagi, with S-shaped fluted panels. The latter two, one probably fourth century and the second from the fifth, could have served for pagan or Christian burial.⁴⁵ Three of the Christian sarcophagi show New Testament scenes, mostly miracles, where Christ and the apostles are portrayed in the guise of pagan intellectuals, often bearded, wearing the *pallium* and carrying book rolls.⁴⁶ One includes a female figure in prayer (*orans*) with her hands raised. A fourth sarcophagus (fig. 24) depicts the Old Testament story of Susanna and the Elders (Dan. 13). At the end of the narrative scenes, working left to right, there is a more iconic image, in which Susanna – or the deceased – stands between two trees and two male figures dressed as philosophers. All three figures are larger than those in the narrative, and the female figure is holding a scroll box in her left hand and gesturing with her right in the manner of an orator. This type of sarcophagus may thus go beyond the biblical exegesis that interpreted Susanna's liberation from wrongful arrest as a metaphor for the liberation of the soul. The intellectualized female figure could personify both *paideia* (learning) and the liberated soul.⁴⁷

A further type of sarcophagus from this period, the Bethesda sarcophagus, can be found mounted into the façade of Tarragona's Gothic cathedral. It is divided by a central section, to the left of which are two scenes of Christ's miracles and a third scene, in which Christ and an apostle, framed by micro-architecture, walk towards the central narrative. This scene

40 Sastre, 2011, 567.

41 Rodà, 2001, 70.

42 Kulikowski, 2004, 224-26; Oepen, 2001, 257-72.

43 Elsner, 2009, 181-204.

44 Gregory of Tours, 2004, 115-16.

45 Clavería, 2001, 41-2, and 35-6.

46 Zanker, 1995, 290; Oepen, 2001, 263-64; Brenk, 1980, 44.

47 Huskinson, 1999, 190-213. See also Zanker, 1995, 286.

Figure 24 Gerona (Sant Feliu), Susanna and the Elders sarcophagus

depicts the miracle at Bethesda, shown in two registers, again defined by micro-architecture. To the right is Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, the scene that may have prompted the choice of this sarcophagus for a position by the west door of the cathedral. All the scenes are unified by another small architectural frieze that runs behind them. The original location of the sarcophagus is unknown, but it may have come from the Christian necropolis outside the city walls, between the *Via Augusta* and the river Francolí. Other cities along the northeast coast, including Barcelona and Empúries, also had marble sarcophagi imported from Rome. In Zaragoza, on the river Ebro, the most prestigious burial site by the middle of the fourth century was the Christian cemetery, probably close to a *martyrium*, on the south side of the city. Two sarcophagi, dated to the second quarter of the fourth century, may have come

from that cemetery and are now preserved in the crypt of the church of Santa Engracia. One, carved from Parian marble and traditionally thought to have held the body of St. Engracia, depicts a female *orans*, flanked by scenes of St. Peter on the left and miracles of Christ on the right. The other, carved from Proconnesian marble, is more unusual in its iconography and its form. In the centre of a frieze of New Testament scenes the Hand of God reaches down and grips the hand of a female figure, presumably the deceased, in a gesture of *receptio animae*, the acceptance of the soul. Equally remarkably, small figures of Atlas (Atlantes) support the upper frieze at each corner of the sarcophagus, indicating that the upper level is designated as celestial.⁴⁸ The original lid, as in most other cases, has been lost. On the ends

48 Oepen, 2001, 262-63.

Figure 25 Zaragoza (Santa Engracia), sarcophagus with Atlantes



of the sarcophagus are scenes of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, one with the Tree of Knowledge and the other where God, in the guise of a philosopher, gives them a lamb and a sheaf of corn (fig. 25).

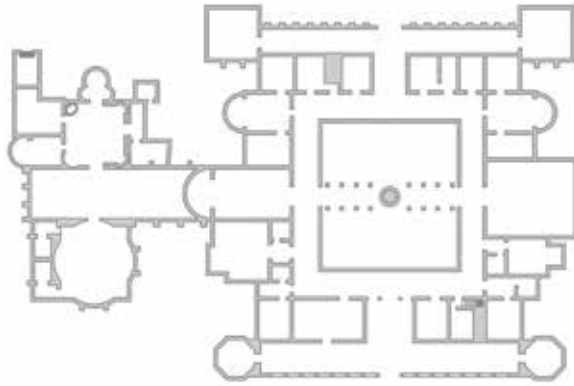
The south of the peninsula, along the coast and especially in the Guadalquivir valley, has yielded many explicitly Christian sarcophagi, and excavations continue to find fragments. In 1962 a fine example was found in a cemetery north of the city of Córdoba, on the road to Mérida. A developed form of the columnar sarcophagus, this piece has features in common with the better known and more accomplished sarcophagus of Junius Bassus the Younger in Rome (AD 359). Its main scenes are set under alternating pediments and arches, and divided by miniature spiral columns topped by Corinthian capitals. They depict the Sacrifice of Abraham, Peter's denial

of Christ, the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, Adam and Eve and the serpent, and Peter striking water from the dry rock. Even more significantly, small scenes, here telling the story of Jonah and the Whale, occupy the miniature spandrels of the arches, as they do on the Junius Bassus example.⁴⁹ Constantinian workshops in Rome exported this type of sarcophagus to Baetica from the second quarter of the fourth century, and other examples have been found in Almería, Córdoba, Itálica, and in Jaén.⁵⁰ As with the pagan sarcophagi, Christian sarcophagi were sometimes transported over considerable distances. The early fourth-century sarcophagus found at San Justo de la Vega (León) was traditionally thought to have been used for

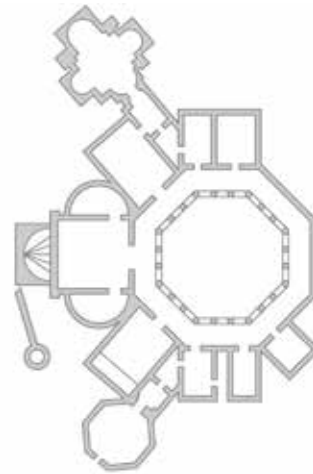
49 For the Bassus sarcophagus, see Elsner, 1998, 195-97.

50 Fernández Díaz, 2001, 88.

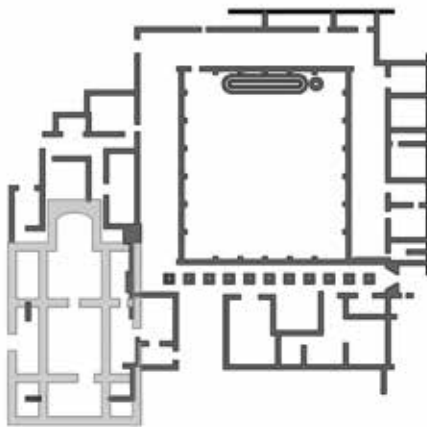
Plans II Plans of Late Antique Villas



Villa of La Olmeda, Pedrosa de la Vega



Villa of Rabaçal, Coimbra



Villa Fortunatus, Fraga



Villa of the Muses, Arróniz

the burial of Alfonso III, king of Asturias, in the tenth century, before it was moved to the nearby cathedral of Astorga. Nothing is known of its original context. Otherwise, early Christian sarcophagi remain monuments of the town, with one possible exception that will be considered below.

Villa Estates

More splendid and extensive than the mosaics in the rural estates of Aquitaine across the Pyrenees, the best mosaics in the monumental villas of Hispania came close to rivalling those of Piazza Armerina in Sicily or the

'Constantinian' villa at Antioch. The plan and size of these villa estates varied enormously.⁵¹ Nearly all had some kind of courtyard or peristyle, and beyond that, apsed, polygonal, and polylobed rooms, whilst ranges of smaller rectangular rooms came together in diverse combinations. Perhaps most unusually the residential part of the villa at Rabaçal (Coimbra, Portugal) had an octagonal peristyle, where a series of rooms was located on six of the sides; excavations have also found carved marble and stucco panels that decorated the baths (fig. 26).⁵² In southern Lusitania, parts of Baetica, and occasionally elsewhere, small buildings enlivened villa grounds, probably ornamental shrines to nymphs (*nymphaea*). Some were used to display collections of antique sculpture, a function confirmed by excavation at Quinta das Longas (Portugal), El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Córdoba), Casa del Mitra and Casilla de la Lámpara (Córdoba), and El Antigons (Tarragona).⁵³ The larger collection found at Valdetorres de

Jarama, north of Madrid, consisted unusually of contemporary works from Asia Minor c. 400.⁵⁴ This monumental villa culture of late antique Spain and Portugal essentially follows arterial routes through the centre of the peninsula.⁵⁵ It paralleled sections of the *Via de la Plata* and parts of the diagonal road from Toledo towards Zaragoza, and flourished in the fertile valleys of the Ebro and Duero rivers. Recent excavations have detected it also along the Guadalquivir. In contrast, villas in other areas, for example along the coast, around Lisbon, Valencia, Tarragona, or in the south, are more modest and may be linked to local industries such as the production of fish sauce (*garum*).⁵⁶ There are some exceptions, including the vast estates at Veranes, outside Gijón in Cantabria, and at Torre de Palma (Portugal).⁵⁷ Some geographic concentrations suggest synergy between a town and a monumental villa, for example the sudden rise of the town of Alcalá de Henares (*Complutum*) and the villa of Carranque, both near the diagonal road to the north of Toledo. The basis of the wealth that created and sustained the villas and their extravagant artistic decoration remains a matter of debate. If it could be understood, it might also help to explain some of the geographical concentrations. A few villas can be connected with a named *dominus*, but any biography or information on their commercial interests is more elusive.⁵⁸ In common with such estate owners in other provinces, they are likely to have been members of the senatorial aristocracy and often provincial

Figure 26 Villa of Rabaçal, decorative panel



51 Teichner, 2011, 293-308.

52 García-Entero, 2005, 407-10.

53 Bowes, 2005b, 230-31; Stirling, 2005, 179-82; Brown, 2012, 206-207.

54 Stirling, 2005, 178-85; Vaquerizo, 2012, 125-44; Vaquerizo, 1995, 121-58; Vaquerizo, 1997; Koppel, 2008, 100-31; Nogales, 2004, 144-45.

55 Bowes, 2013, 191-226; Chavarría, 2005, 519-55.

56 Fernández Ochoa, 2008a.

57 Fernández Ochoa, 2008b, 435-79; most recently the villa of Noheda, see Valero Tévar, 2013, 307-330.

58 Chavarría, 2007, 539-44; Cameron, 1993, 92-96; Banaji, 2010, 185.

administrators. Some, like Emperor Theodosius, may have risen within a military career, others through different spheres of patronage and influence. The administrative scale of some of these complexes, like Carranque and Cercadilla in Córdoba, may indicate a continuing involvement with state bureaucracy.⁵⁹ However, debates around a purported responsibility for supply lines (*annona*) from North Africa, along the *Via de la Plata* or on the Mérida-Zaragoza road, remain unresolved. The army continued to maintain and fortify the road infrastructure, especially in the northwest, although major engineering projects had not been undertaken since the second century. This geographic bias suggests that mining may have continued.⁶⁰ It used to be thought that the gold mines of the northwest were exhausted by the third century, but Jonathan Edmondson's suggestion that there might instead have been a change in scale, pattern, and management has much to recommend it.⁶¹ Mining contracts over a wider area, and as part of a diverse economy that included olive oil, grain, wine, horses, and textiles, might begin to make sense of the elaborate villas of Hispania.⁶²

Villa Mosaics

There is no denying that the main artistic innovations still apparent today were applied to the floors of a few luxurious country estates. Some studies have criticized the attention paid to such mosaics in the past, especially where they have been studied without an

historical, archaeological, or social context.⁶³ Nonetheless their artistic importance requires detailed analysis. In those villas larger than life-size human figures look out from dramatic narratives and confront the viewer. Baroque foliage and masks swirl around them. Dense polychrome carpets, with geometric patterns, both encompass and lead away from these figurative scenes. Mosaic stretches over every surface, dipping into basins and over steps, and reaching into the corners of even the most complex multi-faceted rooms. The villa with the most extraordinary mosaic decoration is one of the furthest north. La Olmeda (Pedrosa de la Vega, Palencia), built by the river Carrion some 60 kilometres north of the Roman city of Palencia (*Pallantia*) was a sizeable villa where the main rooms were arranged off a corridor that surrounded a large square courtyard. Two octagonal towers flanked the main entrance, and on the western side a separate baths complex was linked to the main block by a wide corridor. Most of the mosaics are developed versions of the geometric patterns found in the third century, for example at Conimbriga, but the floor of the main reception room at La Olmeda makes a very different kind of statement (fig. 27). The stones that form it must have been transported some distance as the area is devoid of quarries.⁶⁴ The artists too are likely to have travelled a long way. Entering from the corridor, the viewer first encounters a wide band of ribbon meandering around lotus flowers; beyond that, guilloche and laurel wreath interlace between other motifs, peltas, flowers, leaves, and crowsteps. A wave band divides this geometric section from the first figurative panel. Here, hunters on horseback and on foot, accompanied by dogs, fight wild animals: lions and other big cats, a large boar

⁵⁹ Bowes, 2013.

⁶⁰ Díaz, 2005, 277-83.

⁶¹ Edmondson, 1989, 84-102.

⁶² Bowes, 2013, 209-10; Rabaçal may have had storage for textiles; Liédana in Navarre and São Cucufate in Badajoz both had very large granaries.

⁶³ Bowes, 2007, 146-47; Scott, 2000, 9-17.

⁶⁴ Dunbabin, 1999, 153-54.

Figure 27 Pedrosa de la Vega, villa of La Olmeda, mosaic with Achilles on Skyros



and a bear. This scene has been compared to third-century North African hunting mosaics – for example at Althiburus (Tunisia) – for the way that separate vignettes are combined, each one with its own indication of landscape, a rock or a tree, on a white ground.⁶⁵ In the fourth century, the corridor mosaic of the Great Hunt at Piazza Armerina in central Sicily and three trapezoidal panels from the ‘Constantinian’ villa in Antioch (Antakya, Turkey) provide the closest parallels, where they are thought to lead into ceremonial areas.⁶⁶ These parallels say much about the social aspirations and network of the *dominus* at La Olmeda, even though nothing is known of the family there, or

in the Sicilian or Syrian villas.⁶⁷ What is clear is that in the mid-to-late fourth century the elite in more than one province decided to express their affluence through floor decoration that celebrated *otium* (leisure).⁶⁸

The main panel that juxtaposes the hunt at La Olmeda is a very different composition, which expresses the owner’s claim to *paideia* and also has parallels in Antioch. Peter Brown has said that the imperial elite had a ‘shared imaginative landscape’ provided by *paideia*, surely one that was also shared by the owners of La Olmeda.⁶⁹ A theatrical central scene from the post-Homeric story of Achilles on the island of Skyros occupies this upper panel, a fertile narrative for Roman art and literature from the first century AD and an important ingredient of *paideia*.⁷⁰ Achilles’s mother, Thetis, attempts to protect Achilles by hiding him on Skyros, dressed as one of the daughters of Lykomedes. Odysseus, knowing that Troy cannot be taken without Achilles, seeks him out by going to the island in disguise as a peddler of jewellery and arms. When Achilles cannot resist reaching for a spear and is unsuccessfully restrained by the daughters, he is unmasked. The heroic and tragic events of the Trojan War, and thus the founding of Rome and its empire, unravel from this moment, emphasised in the panel by the baskets of wool and spindles scattered over the floor. This event also appears on two of the few surviving examples of silverware from this period, the octagonal Kaiseraugst dish, found in Switzerland, and the circular Sevso Achilles plate, which suggests that it was not

67 Dunbabin, 1999, 131–33.

68 Arce, 1997, 19–32; for a refutation of a genuine love of culture amongst late fourth-century landowners, see Cameron, 2011.

69 Brown, 1992, 41.

70 For the Achilleid of Statius, see Ewald, 2004, 246–47; Trimble, 2002, 236–38; Leader-Newby, 2004, 125.

65 Dunbabin, 1999, 153 and 112–13.

66 Dunbabin, 1999, 130–42; 163–66.

an unusual choice for a room where friends and acquaintances could be entertained.⁷¹ The female figures, who emerge from a curtained monumental entrance on the left of the mosaic, are elongated to heighten the drama centred on the fateful gesture of the young Achilles. For all its female interest, the story, and its depiction in the mosaic, sets out to appeal to men who have had or hope to have a military career. By the very absence of war, it celebrates Achilles's prowess in battle. Highlighted against the white ground on the right side of the mosaic is the older bearded figure of Odysseus, perhaps a character from mythology with whom the *dominus* could identify. A career in the army had been essential to the rise of Emperor Theodosius and his family, as it had been for other newly successful individuals from Hispania. It seems likely that La Olmeda belonged to a family with similar experience and perhaps a long official posting in the east, like that of Nummius Aemilianus Dexter. The mosaic is highly accomplished in every way and should have astounded those who had not seen mythological scenes depicted on such a scale before. The artists were in complete control of their medium, and this scene far exceeds any pattern book. The immediate drama of the central panel is enclosed in a border of unashamed baroque fantasy. Disembodied female heads personifying the seasons rest in baskets of acanthus leaves at the corners. Along the sides, exotic hybrid birds, whose tails metamorphose into dolphins, suspend in their beaks a series of long-necked amphorae; from these hang foliate extravagances so gelatinous that they resemble jellyfish. From their fluttering wings hang a set of cartouches so carefully individualised that they may depict members of the villa's family. Taken as a whole, the floor decoration of this room is a remarkably subtle

display of aristocratic status and *paideia*. The combination of the baroque border and the large mythological scene specifically links the formation of the artists to Antioch where large heads and luscious foliate scrollwork surround the hunting scenes in the Constantinian villa, one of which incorporates the myth of Meleager and Atalanta. More classical versions of such combinations were long-established in Antioch, but may have been reinvigorated in the fourth century by contact with North African mosaic workshops that had developed baroque panels over many years at, for example, Zliten (Libya) and Thamugadi (Timgad, Tunisia). The floor at La Olmeda does not merely copy works in these traditions but develops them not only through its bold eclectic combination of geometric, hunting, and mythological sections in one floor but through the dynamism of the designs and an imaginative approach to detailing.

Very few surviving mosaics in Spain or Portugal equal those at La Olmeda. A large mosaic found in the suburban villa of "El Hinojal" (fig. 28), outside Mérida, shows a similar level of accomplishment but its subject matter is much more limited. Diverse geometric shapes, set at an angle to the central panel, cover most of the area. The lush foliage and busts of the seasons that occupy the dark border also look towards Antioch, but lack the invention of La Olmeda. Likewise, the single hunter spearing a large boar, which fills the central panel, is as skilfully executed as the hunters at La Olmeda, but as an isolated event has much less impact. The explanation for these similarities and differences remains elusive. The shared elements support the idea that town houses and suburban villas at this time were in dialogue with artistic innovations in the large country estates. It is also possible that the *dominus* of La Olmeda would have had close contact with the circle of imperial officials in Mérida, such as the recipient of the *missorium* of Theodosius. He might even

71 Leader-Newby, 2004, 125-36.

Figure 28 Mérida, villa of "El Hinojal", mosaic of the hunt (Museo Nacional de Arte Romano)



have been one of them. Exchange of gifts between the elite was an essential component of their friendship and social network (*amicitia*), and along with food, trees, books, and even sets of columns, the services of craftsmen would have been exchanged.⁷² Perhaps El Hinojal was a small job to fill the time while the mosaicists waited for their boat home.

Another house at Mérida, on the calle Holguin, also wished to participate in this cultural milieu. In the fourth century the street may have been a *decumanus minor* leading down to the river Guadiana. The house and its related buildings were excavated in 1982 to reveal mosaic panels with hunting and circus scenes, juxtaposed with a more unusual mosaic that combines two elements, the Seven Sages

and a narrative scene.⁷³ The Seven Sages are identified as early Greek philosophers by their ascetic appearance and their scrolls, as well as being named individually in uncial Greek characters.⁷⁴ They appear to be participating in a symposium. The centrality of such a gathering can be gauged by the writing of the early fifth century pagan poet Macrobius. He imagined a symposium attended by some of the leading thinkers of the 380s, including Symmachus, in an attempt to preserve traditional Roman religious and literary culture.⁷⁵ Perhaps the

⁷³ Álvarez Martínez, 1988, 99-120.

⁷⁴ Álvarez Martínez, 1988, 117, appendix 1: it is unlikely that the mosaicist was Greek, as there is an error in the writing. The stones used for the mosaic tesserae came from a local quarry, about four kilometres northwest of the city; Zanker, 1995, 273.

⁷⁵ Irvine, 1994, 142.

⁷² Wood, 2000, 301-303.

patron of this mosaic wished to project such an image of active *paideia* for himself and his friends. The narrative element in the mosaic helps to confirm that idea. It is usually identified as a scene from Homer's *Iliad*, 'The Anger of Achilles', where Agamemnon forces Achilles to give him his war prize, the princess Briseis. The owner of this house seemed anxious to display all the aristocratic virtues of his time, *otium* through hunting, generosity at the circus, and Hellenic *paideia*.⁷⁶ Unfortunately there is little recorded evidence for the content of these rooms, and thus for the visibility of the mosaic decoration and possible resonances between it and other room decoration, furnishings, and tableware.⁷⁷

Other technically accomplished mosaics in Hispania concentrate on watery themes. The closest geographically to La Olmeda are from the Villa Possídica near Dueñas. This suburban villa, some fifteen kilometres to the south of Palencia (*Pallantia*), was built on the banks of the river Pisuerga, just above its confluence with the river Carrión, along a secondary road that followed the river and linked the major Zaragoza-Astorga road to the route along the river Duero. Its baths complex had an exceptional group of mosaics, particularly a wide panel in the *frigidarium* with a large head of the god Oceanus, the fount of all waters.⁷⁸ Identified by the lobster claws on his brow and his wavy long hair and beard, the god is surrounded by dolphins, river fish, and two Nereids, or sea nymphs, riding a sea bull and a sea leopard. Although finely modelled, the faces remain generic, and the whole composition has several parallels in North Africa so, unlike the mosaics at La Olmeda, could have been put together from a pattern book or been

executed by visiting mosaicists.⁷⁹ Another aquatic mosaic was discovered in the Quintana del Marco villa on the road towards Mérida, and near the confluence of the rivers Duerna and Orbigo. Now in the Museo de León, the mosaic portrays a scene from the voyage of the Argonauts, as told by Ovid and Virgil, the capture of Hylas.⁸⁰ This subject featured in the mid-fourth-century *opus sectile* panels that decorated the pagan basilica of Junius Bassus the Elder in Rome, and has also been found on mosaics in the bedroom of a villa at Carranque (Toledo).⁸¹ According to the myth, Hylas, a companion of Hercules, was sent ashore in search of water. He found a fountain, but it was guarded by nymphs so entranced by his beauty that they stole him away to their watery home. In this mosaic the determined nymphs, in a landscape indicated by a rocky spring and a tree, cling onto Hylas who struggles to be free. The León depiction has a symmetrical design with one nymph each side of Hylas, similar to that in Junius Bassus's basilica and unlike the earlier *emblema* example found at Itálica (Seville). The nymphs are naked except for diadems and drapery that swirls around their shoulders and legs, as is Hylas who holds the ewer once meant to collect the water. The nymphs are firmly weighted, but Hylas is off balance with his left knee on a rock and his right leg extended. The flesh of the nymphs and Hylas is finely worked in marble and glass.

Closer to La Olmeda, to the west of Logroño on the road to Astorga, another fourth-century villa, Cardeñajimeno, was built beside another small river, the Arlanzón. Little remains apart from a large mosaic that has been severely

⁷⁶ Arce, 2007a, 305-36.

⁷⁷ Ellis, 2007, 3-4.

⁷⁸ López Monteagudo, 2006, 497-503.

⁷⁹ Dunbabin, 1978, 149-54, Pl. A.

⁸⁰ Grau Lobo, 2007, 114-17: the mosaic was damaged during the Civil War when the museum in San Marcos was a Francoist prison.

⁸¹ Elsner, 1998, 192-93.

Figure 29 Villa of Cardeñajimeno, mosaic of Atalanta (Museo de Burgos)



damaged. Although its execution is not of the highest order, its conception, its choice of myth and border designs, show a desire to emulate greater houses. The large central panel shows a scene from the myth of Atalanta and Meleager's hunt for the boar of Calydon (fig. 29). This scene shows the end of the hunt, when Meleager gives the boar's head or pelt to Atalanta. The story was most famously told by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* (VIII.268-546). Despite the popularity of that text, and of depictions of the hero Meleager in statuettes and other media, this particular choice of iconography was unusual in the west in the fourth century.⁸² Even the hunting mosaic in the Constantinian villa in Antioch opted for a less specific view of the Calydonian

hunt alongside more generic hunting scenes. The Cardeñajimeno mosaic inverts the Antioch example by putting the myth at the centre and populating the wide border with the boar hunt and other non-specific hunting scenes. A search for another depiction of this moment in the story leads to the central medallion of the unprovenanced Sevso Meleager silver plate.⁸³ It is thus possible that tableware inspired this choice of subject at Cardeñajimeno. The outer border consists of scrollwork encircling heads or *protomai* of animals, similar in design to those that cover the porticoes of the great peristyle at Piazza Armerina, although again the execution is inferior. It is unlikely that the owners of Cardeñajimeno were socially linked to the aristocratic owners of Piazza Armerina, who are thought to have held high office in Rome or the provinces, and they were probably not as well connected as their La Olmeda neighbours, but through their mosaic they could participate in the same mix of *otium* and *paideia* that defined the uppermost echelons of the elite.

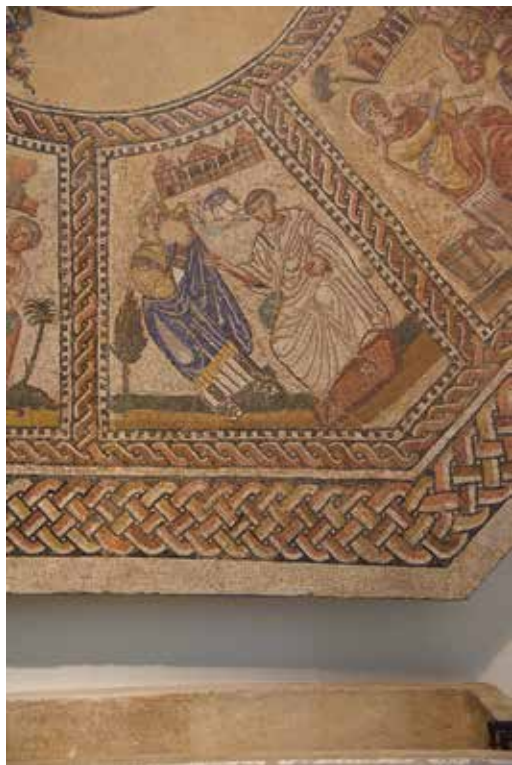
Although many fourth-century villas have mosaics that would merit further study, only two more villas will be considered here: the first at Arróniz (Navarre) because its mosaics fit clearly with those already studied, although the villa is some distance away, and the second at Carranque (Toledo) because of the extraordinary claims that have been made for it. In the fertile land by the river Ega, near Arróniz, the villa 'of the Muses' is named for an unusual octagonal mosaic that depicts the nine muses within nine panels. The small room that it once decorated may have been a study.⁸⁴ Personifications of Calliope (epic poetry), Terpsichore (dance), Melpomene (tragedy), Thalia (comedy),

⁸³ Leader-Newby, 2004, 137.

⁸⁴ For possible study rooms in villas, see Carrié, 2010, 63-74.

⁸² Stirling, 2005, 86-87.

Figure 30 Arróniz, mosaic of the Muses (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid)



Euterpe (music), Clio (history), Erato (lyric poetry), Polimnia (sacred poetry), and Urania (astronomy and astrology) taken together claim a wide range of learning for the owner (fig. 30). In the background of each scene, an image of a villa, often with one or more trees, indicates a rural setting. Each muse is depicted with an attribute or gesture, and with a practitioner of the relevant art, recalling the Tunisian mosaic of the poet Virgil between two Muses from the Maison de l'Arsenal at Sousse on the eastern coast of Tunisia, or the Monnus mosaic at Trier, where Euterpe teaches Hyagnis the art of playing the flute. Although the execution of the mosaics at Arróniz is not consistently expert, the octagon mosaic is an explicit example of the kind of amateur *paideia* identified by Paul

Zanker.⁸⁵ Three other technically more accomplished mosaics contain small narrative panels surrounded by dense geometric borders and one fine band of acanthus scroll with *protomai*, similar to those at Piazza Armerina. There is no agreed interpretation of these three mosaics, but it is likely that the bedroom scene shows Venus and Eros, whereas the two panels in the main reception room probably depict book 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, when Aeneas abandons Dido. Some scholars, including the excavators, have preferred to see the seated woman as the goddess Cybele and the male figure in a Phrygian cap as Attis leaving the goddess and, in the second panel, his betrothal to the daughter of the king of Pesinunte. They link this to an area outside, which they interpret as a site of ritual bull-sacrifice.⁸⁶ Stylistically these mosaics are superior to the octagonal mosaic of the Muses, and the drapery, formed by narrow polychrome parallel panels, relates to a small panel depicting a group of figures, perhaps the owners, at Piazza Armerina.

The villa of Carranque stands almost at the geographic centre of the peninsula between Toledo and Madrid, a position that may have led to some aggrandizement of the site. By the river Guadarrama, Carranque is near the Roman road from Zaragoza to Mérida. Two main areas of construction sit about 400m apart. One includes a baths complex formed by a range of polygonal rooms with mosaic floors. Long polychrome carpets with strong geometric decoration cover the corridors and several rooms with a range of motifs: repeating divided circles; simple guilloche; lozenges and peltas; bands of interlace; and Solomon knots, as well as bands of chevron and chequerwork.⁸⁷ Figurative panels decorate three of the rooms

⁸⁵ Zanker, 1995, 288.

⁸⁶ Blázquez Martínez, 2006, 58.

⁸⁷ Bowes, 2005b, 218-226.

and part of a corridor. The mosaic in the largest of three polygonal rooms on the north side depicts Achilles and his captive lover, Briseis, framed by a border of perspective meander. Opposite the entrance is a semi-circular apse that opens off the long double-apsed corridor. Here a highly stylised head of Oceanus sits amid exotic fish and sea urchins, his hair and beard spreading into a repeating wave pattern. In another room, Mars and Venus watch a nude hunter fight a boar, whilst the hunter's hounds are named as Leander and Tityrus, perhaps recording two of the owner's favourite dogs. Yet the mosaic that has caused most comment is in a bedroom. In the centre is a nimbed female bust, probably Venus, the goddess of love, presiding over four busts in rectangles at the corners and four semi-circular panels containing mythological scenes of poetic metamorphosis.⁸⁸ These include Hylas and the Nymphs, Diana and Actaeon, the nymph Amythone and Eros, and more unusually, the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. Like the scene of Meleager and Atalanta, this is exceptional amongst surviving mosaics from this period in the west but was popular in the east; it is also one of the small scenes chased along the rim of the Sevso Meleager plate.⁸⁹

So far, the mosaic decoration of this villa is not greatly at variance with the other villas already considered; indeed, it is not amongst the highest achievements in that medium in the peninsula. One mosaic inscription has challenged that notion. It marks the entrance to the metamorphosis room and wishes a certain 'Maternus' happiness in this bedroom.⁹⁰ The name Maternus has led the excavators of this villa to connect it with the Praetorian Prefect of Emperor Theodosius, Maternus Cynegius, and

to see this villa as especially imperial. Other scholars have questioned whether Maternus Cynegius ever visited Spain, although his wife had come from Hispania.⁹¹ It is recorded that Maternus Cynegius was buried in the emperor's church, the *apostoleion*, dedicated in 388, but his body was disinterred by his widow, Achantia, the following year and brought on foot to Hispania (*ad Hispanias*).⁹² On this basis, some have concluded that the second complex at Carranque was a basilica and that a polygonal room connected to it was Maternus's mausoleum. However, there is no evidence for Christian practice in the fourth-century level. The ground plan, often described as 'a cross within a square', is entirely consistent with a villa where rooms are arranged around a central courtyard and the entrance is a double-apsed atrium. A small part of an *opus mixtum* structure still stands and probably once supported a dome with a sail vault formed by pitched bricks, a technique already established elsewhere by the third and fourth centuries.⁹³ Alternatively this building may belong to a later date.⁹⁴ Other archaeological evidence put forward to support the idea that this building is exceptional include fragments of marble from Egypt, Anatolia, and Greece, some of which the excavators believe were new to the peninsula.⁹⁵ Highly abbreviated quarry marks on column fragments have also been interpreted as imperial but more work is needed to justify that conclusion. In summary, it is more likely, as Javier Arce has argued, that the second complex was also residential, and that the villa at Carranque is distinctive but

88 Arce, 2003, 19.

89 Kondoleon, 1995, 148-57.

90 Gómez Pallarés, 1997, 148-52.

91 Kulikowski, 2004, 146; Arce, 2003, 17-18.

92 Arce, 2003, 19.

93 Lancaster, 2008, 274.

94 Utrero, 2006a, 531-32.

95 García-Entero 2007, 53-69.

not extraordinary.⁹⁶ Part of the second complex may have been reused for the Christian cult and for burials towards the end of the fifth century, as were many other villas.

Christian Mausolea?

In addition to Carranque, a number of other buildings has been identified as a group of late fourth- or early fifth-century Christian mausolea or *martyria*: Pueblanueva (Toledo), La Alberca (Murcia), Marialba (León), and La Cocosa (Badajoz).⁹⁷ Apart from that designation, they have little in common and could have been pagan mausolea of the type frequently built by wealthy landowners on their villa estates.⁹⁸ The mausoleum at La Cocosa (11.4 x 6.8m) lies about 250m from the main villa. Its three sections are inscribed in a large rectangle, an eastern apse with a marble sarcophagus below the floor, a slightly larger trilobed space, and a narrow double-apsed atrium. The vault was probably decorated with a glass mosaic as fragments of tesserae were found in the excavation along with flakes of paint from the walls. The sarcophagus is likely to have held a *dominus* of the villa, but, contrary to what is often asserted, there is no indication whether the burial was Christian or pagan.⁹⁹ The two-storey rectangular structure (7.5 x 12.50m), with prominent external buttresses, near the suburban villa of La Alberca, is no more secure in its categorisation. It was eventually the site of a series of graves, some in earth and others with a covering of brick, tiles, or mosaic. It is not clear, however, if burial

was its original function, and its designation as a Christian mausoleum is based solely on typological similarity between it and a mausoleum at Marusinac (Salona, Dalmatia).¹⁰⁰ Yet, as Richard Krautheimer states, only the site of the Dalmatian building outside the town within a cemetery and the way that that mausoleum is enclosed within an atrium reveals its function.¹⁰¹ Neither of those contextual markers apply in the case of La Alberca.

Another much larger structure (23.4 x 16.3m), which lies by the river Bernesga some seven kilometres to the south at Marialba de la Ribera (León), was systematically excavated by a German archaeological team led by Hauschild between 1967 and 1968. The report describes a large rectangular chamber with an apse in the shape of a horseshoe arch, which is dated by the excavators to the fourth century, although horseshoe arches in plan are found more often in the sixth century, and alterations, including a baptismal font, were probably made at that date.¹⁰² The building is oriented roughly north-south, and may have begun as a pagan temple.¹⁰³ At some point, perhaps c. 400, the interior was articulated by niches and pilasters that may have supported a roof and perhaps a cupola; a narrow double-apsed atrium was added at the western entrance.¹⁰⁴ Several tombs were found, mostly undated, but two by the main entrance held four bodies with some jewellery and a glass bowl. These objects, together with the east-west orientation of these tombs, led Hauschild to conclude that this was a Christian monument, one of the earliest in the peninsula. But there is

⁹⁶ Arce, 2003, 21-24.

⁹⁷ Bowes, 2006, 73-91; for an alternative view see Utrero, 2009d, 17-34.

⁹⁸ Brown, 2012, 212.

⁹⁹ Bowes, 2006, 90-91.

¹⁰⁰ Bowes, 2005b, 212-14; Hauschild, 1999, 71-89.

¹⁰¹ Krautheimer, 1986, 179-80.

¹⁰² The exterior wall is dated to the fourth century by the system of construction: masonry with courses of brick and strikingly wide mortar joints.

¹⁰³ Bowes, 2005b, 218.

¹⁰⁴ Utrero, 2006a, 115.

no supporting evidence in the form of liturgical furniture or articles carrying Christian motifs. Thirteen burials were also laid out in the apse at some point, and may have been behind the development of a cult of thirteen martyrs first recorded as late as the tenth century.¹⁰⁵ Thus it is also possible that this building was refurbished c. 400 as a pagan place of burial, and used as a Christian building only in the sixth century.

At Las Vegas de Pueblanueva (fig. 31), sited on a bend of the river Tagus and on the road from Mérida to Toledo, is an unexcavated villa or settlement and, about 500 metres away, a large octagonal building (24m in diameter).¹⁰⁶ Schlunk and Hauschild, who excavated this structure in the 1970s, have proposed that it once had an upper central chamber supported

by an octagonal arcade and perhaps a domed roof. The surviving elements include an integral crypt, also octagonal.¹⁰⁷ Typologically the octagon at Pueblanueva has been compared to the mausoleum of the pagan Emperor Diocletian at Split (c. 300), and to other mausolea inspired by Split. Although now sadly neglected, as are many of these sites, the octagon at Pueblanueva was once an imposing family mausoleum. Again there are signs of reuse from the later sixth century, when it may have been used by Christians as a church, and of even later reuse, when, with the addition of a mihrab, it may have functioned as a mosque.¹⁰⁸ Three sarcophagi were found in the crypt, one explicitly Christian, and Schlunk proposed that these were part of the original conception

Figure 31 Pueblanueva (Toledo) mausoleum



¹⁰⁵ Castillo Maldonado, 2005, 162.

¹⁰⁶ Bowes, 2005b, 210-11.

¹⁰⁷ Bowes, 2006, 89; Utrero, 2006, 210.

¹⁰⁸ Calvo, 2011, 21-22.

of the mausoleum.¹⁰⁹ This may be so, but the Christian sarcophagus is unusual, not least in its location, far from other related examples. Most significantly it was not imported but made of marble from Estremoz or Vila Viçosa (Portugal).¹¹⁰ Other locally made sarcophagi are usually dated to the late fifth or sixth centuries. Moreover they are idiosyncratic and not, like this sarcophagus, copies of imported sarcophagi featuring two groups of six apostles either side of a figure of Christ.

The final candidate for consideration as a fourth-century Christian mausoleum is Centcelles. The villa of Centcelles lies some 7 kilometres inland from Tarragona along the river Francolí, and by the Roman road from Tarragona to Zaragoza.¹¹¹ It is one of the most puzzling enigmas of late antique art in Hispania. There had been a villa at Centcelles in the second century, which was re-built and refurbished extensively in the late fourth. Part of it has survived as a standing structure because it continued in use as a parish church. Excavations have also revealed a small baths complex. In the centre of the range there are two large rooms. One is enclosed by four semi-circular shallow apses, a shape known as a tetraconch, and surmounted by a half-dome. The other is a circular room on the interior but square on the exterior. The centre of the dome retains fragments of fine mosaic decoration in three registers.¹¹² There has been much debate about the meaning of the scenes in this mosaic, and they will probably never be completely understood, but what is clear is that the mosaicist placed Old and New Testament scenes

alongside the portrayal of secular activity. The lowest register depicts a nobleman, a *vir illustris*, looking directly out from a panorama of a deer-hunt outside a villa. Accompanied by five men, he is sometimes thought to be the owner or *dominus* of this villa, although the image of the villa is generic, with the kind of pedimented gable and tower found in many other contemporary mosaics, including those at Arróniz. Above a double border of guilloche and wavy ribbon, the middle register contains a series of Christian narrative and allegorical images framed by illusionistic spiral columns with Ionic capitals, recalling the micro-architecture found on sarcophagi discovered in Baetica as well as Rome. Some subjects emerge from the fragments more clearly than others. A lion's head draws attention to an emblematic rendering of the story of Daniel in the Lions' Den, where two lions flank the figure of Daniel who stands raising his hands in prayer (*orans*) (fig. 32). To his left is a row of scenes from the story of Jonah and the Whale. The finely drawn sailing boat from which Jonah is thrown overboard is almost intact, but most of the other two scenes have been lost, as has much of the panel depicting the Good Shepherd. Noah's Ark was probably to the right of Daniel, followed by two scenes telling the story of the three young Hebrews and the Fiery Furnace. Other panels probably depicted the raising of Lazarus, Adam and Eve, and Moses or Peter striking water from a rock. Most of these images would have been familiar from sarcophagi or perhaps from paintings, especially those that are antitypes of the Resurrection and salvation. The faces and hair of the figures are portrayed with a naturalism that is not typical of mosaics in the peninsula.

A wide geometric band of circles and imbrications divides these Christian scenes from the upper register that has eight sections. Half of these contain *putti* representing the four

109 Hauschild, 1969, 306; Schlunk, 1966, 210-31; Schlunk, 1978, 129; Hauschild, 1978, 310.

110 Oepen, 2001, 264.

111 Arce, 2001; Bowes, 2005a, 213-18; Utrero, 2006a, 543-44.

112 Dunbabin, 1999, 251-52.

Figure 32 Centcelles (Tarragona), villa, detail of dome mosaic



seasons. The fragments that remain from the other four scenes are too few for secure identification. In one panel an enthroned figure in gold and purple may wear a diadem whilst other figures stand to either side; in another, an enthroned figure may hold a *rotulus* or scroll. Some scholars think these figures are imperial, others that they depict bishops, or the owners of the villa.¹¹³ Alternatively they could be personifications of Christian virtues. Two small faces look out from the central medallion of the mosaic, but the rest is impossible to decipher. Even in this fragmentary state, the ensemble remains impressive, and it is apparent that the quality of the work is very high and the materials, especially the gold *tesserae* around some of the figures in the third register, opulent. The exceptional nature of this mosaic, both

its iconography and its execution, has led to on-going arguments about its interpretation. There are two main theories. The first hypothesis, proposed by the German excavators of the site, argues that this is the mausoleum of a son of Constantine the Great, Emperor Constans I, who was murdered in 350 at Elne (Helena), close to the *Via Augusta*, north of the Pyrenees.¹¹⁴ As Constans was said to be trying to escape to Hispania, his supporters could have decided to bring his body there to be buried, rather than taking it to equidistant Arles. Those who maintain this idea use building typology to support the argument, as there had been a fashion for building imperial mausolea with circular chambers and domes in imitation of Diocletian's mausoleum in Split. Santa Costanza in Rome, often thought to be the mausoleum of

¹¹³ Warland, 2002, 21-35; Arce, 2006, 131-41.

¹¹⁴ Schlunk, 1988.

the daughters of Constantine, provides a possible analogue, as its mosaics also encompassed Christian and more worldly themes. Moreover, the use of a space that may have already been built as part of the villa would have made sense in a situation where there was no time to construct a purpose-built mausoleum.¹¹⁵ The existence of an undated crypt below the circular room, and of a porphyry sarcophagus (*labrum*), reused at the nearby monastery of Santes Creus for Pedro III in 1285, complete the physical arguments for this case.¹¹⁶ The funerary associations of the Christian themes in the mosaic and the use of gold and purple still remain the strongest evidence for this theory. The main argument against it is that there is nothing to connect the villa with Constans. When other Iberian villas had private mausolea, these structures usually stood slightly apart and were not joined to a range of rooms as at Centcelles. The crypt may have been added in the medieval period and the porphyry sarcophagus may not have been imported before the thirteenth century.¹¹⁷ Some of those who reject the first theory suggest that this is simply a villa that belonged to a wealthy member of the elite, perhaps connected to the imperial family, and that the circular room is merely an ornate vestibule. Others concede that the Christian salvation imagery indicates a funerary space, but argue that it was built for a local high-ranking official. There is no doubt that this mosaic is exceptional. No comparable use of imagery and materials has survived from elsewhere in the peninsula. In contrast, the buildings of the villa seem to be unexceptional. It is only to be hoped that further excavation may reveal additional evidence.

The most notable aspect of the mosaic at Centcelles was perhaps its use of juxtaposition.

¹¹⁵ Hauschild, 2002, 51-57.

¹¹⁶ Nickson, 2009, 1-14.

¹¹⁷ Brenk, 2002, 59-81.

In the mosaics of town houses or country villas the values of literary *paideia* and active *otium* were celebrated side by side on mosaics that presented the ideal life of the aristocrat. At Centcelles, the subject of *otium* remained but Christian themes replaced more traditional forms of *paideia*. Such integration with pagan cultural forms, and Christian transformation of its themes, dominated the fourth century. It was a period of diverse experimentation in literature and in artistic expression, not least in Hispania where a group of Christian writers attempted to invent new genres. Around 330, Juvencus, a Spanish priest from Elvira (Granada), wrote a poetic life of Christ, 'The Gospels', based mostly on the Book of Matthew, perhaps in an attempt to make the biblical texts more accessible. To help him counter the 'false' tales of Homer and Virgil, he invokes the Holy Spirit in the manner of the Muses. At this time the Christian vocabulary was not yet established, and he uses *spiramen* for Holy Ghost, *tonans* for God, *genitor* for Father, and *uersutia* for the devil, not terms that would eventually become common usage. Nor did his genre become one of the successful new forms in the Christian canon.¹¹⁸ This is particularly instructive, as it emphasises the experimental nature of Christian genres during the fourth century, when neither conceptual formats nor the units used to express them were fixed. This applied as much to visual art as to literature. It also led to increasing diversity and eventually fragmentation in the production of art across the peninsula.

Funerary Mosaics

One artistic genre that had a short life in parts of Spain, almost none in the rest of Europe, but great success in North Africa, especially

¹¹⁸ Green, 2007, 65-80.

Mauretania and Numidia, was the figurative Christian sarcophagus mosaic.¹¹⁹ Palol was the first to publish the wider corpus of Christian mosaics applied to the lids of stone sarcophagi, most of which combine an inscription with non-figurative decoration.¹²⁰ He maintained that the genre came from North Africa to Spain, but Breckenridge argued that the transmission could equally have worked in the opposite direction or come about independently.¹²¹ It is not entirely clear how the artistic dialogue with North Africa operated, but trade between the two coasts was particularly active at this period.¹²² In Hispania, the distribution of the mosaics was mostly restricted to the east coast, the Balearics, and around the lower Ebro valley, but the figurative examples seem to have been confined to Tarragona, to the Ebro valley, and Coscojuela near Huesca.¹²³ Two of the figurative mosaics have been dated by coins found near the tomb slabs in the Ebro valley. Bronze coins of Emperor Gratian (367-383) were found at Coscojuela and coins of Constantius II (337-361) at Alfaro. This suggests a date in the second half of the fourth century for these mosaics. The most accomplished example in Spain came from the Christian necropolis of Francolí in Tarragona. The rectangular panel, enclosed in simple guilloche, shows a male figure in a banded white toga (*toga contabulata*), holding a scroll in his left hand and gesturing with his right, set under an arch (fig. 33).¹²⁴ Above the arch, which is ornamented with stylized egg-and-dart, an inscription in dactylic hexameters against a white ground names the

Figure 33 Tarragona, funerary mosaic (Museu i Necròpolis Palaecristians, Tarragona)



deceased as Optimus and acknowledges his rest 'in a sacred seat of Christ'. His tomb lay in the central nave of a basilica, perhaps built c. 400. He was clearly a privileged member of the Christian community, but it is impossible to prove that he was one of the bishops.¹²⁵ Stems

119 Breckenridge, 1974, 29-43.

120 Palol, 1967, 321-45.

121 Breckenridge, 1974, 35.

122 Reynolds, 2005, 408-12; Arce, 2005b, 341-368.

123 A non-figurative example from Itálica is in the Museo Arqueológico in Seville.

124 Brennan, 2008, 257-270.

125 López Vilar, 2006, 304-305 (English summary).

of red flowers spread across the dark-blue background behind the bearded figure who, without the inscription, might pass for another of the town or country amateur philosophers. Certainly, his neat hair, beard, and dress find analogues in the practitioners depicted on the Arróniz Muses mosaic, figures that also combine a sense of movement with a lack of plasticity. The face seems idealized, but it may have been a portrait.

The fashion for these mosaic tombs continued further up the river Ebro, where an example with a well-modelled bust of the deceased, Ursicinus, was found at Alfaro. Some fragments found recently in Zaragoza may indicate that it was also employed in that city.¹²⁶ Most unexpectedly, a group of these mosaics was excavated in Coscojuela de Fantova, 20 kilometres from Barbastro, in the valley of the river Cinca, and just below the foothills of the Pyrenees. It is often assumed that these funerary slabs must have belonged to saints or bishops, but at Coscojuela they are family monuments. One was dedicated by his wife to a priest called Macedonius; another to a 'dearest Rufus' by his wife. The first is decorated with a figure of the Good Shepherd, a popular choice in North Africa, and the second with an *orans* figure of the deceased surrounded by doves, lotus flowers, and discs as well as a monogram of Christ (chrismon). The execution is enlivened by blue and green glass with grey, red, pink, and ochre tesserae, all from local materials. In their emphasis on the family these mosaics recall those of North Africa, notably at Tabarka (Thabraca, Numidia).¹²⁷ It is likely that a family of aristocrats owned the villa estate at Coscojuela where the burials took place, and that Macedonius and Rufus were members of this

group. The early fifth century would produce an account of heresy in a fortified villa outside Huesca, a story of a *dominus* called Severus who was 'famous for his wealth and power, as well as his scholarship', but owned three books that contained 'the shameful and sacrilegious knowledge of magic incantations'.¹²⁸ Despite an outsider's attempts to prosecute him, Severus was supported by Christian leaders bound to him by *amicitia*, including Bishop Sagittius of Lleida and Bishop Syagrius of Huesca as well as their associates in Tarragona.¹²⁹ If there was still a wide range of acceptable practice c. 420, it is likely that the norms of Christian doctrine, ritual, and organisation were even less fixed in the late fourth century. The bishops often had little effective authority over their large rural dioceses, and old ties of friendship and obligation would have been invaluable for the appearance of order.¹³⁰ The Coscojuela mosaics are likely to pre-date these events by some fifty years, yet the story may give some insight into the personal connections that could have led to the choice of funerary mosaics for burial in a relatively remote villa.

Another rural villa with some evidence of Christian practice is Villa Fortunatus at Fraga (Aragón) close to where the river Cinca meets the river Segre to flow into the Ebro. Like so many others, this rural villa was re-built in the early fourth century, when it was given mythological mosaics in the rooms that surround a substantial rectangular peristyle. At this point the owners seem to have been pagan, and a statue of Attis was found in the excavations. In the later fourth and early fifth centuries the owners made two alterations. A Christian mosaic was laid in a large room opening onto the south gallery of the peristyle, and a room

126 Galve, 2001-2002, 409-14.

127 Thabraca was the port for the export of marbles from the Numidian quarry at Simitthu.

128 Burrus, 1995, 115-125.

129 Bowes, 2005b, 241-42 and 245.

130 Bowes, 2007, 143-70.

in the southwest part of the villa was modified to form a tripartite chancel with a rudimentary crypt.¹³¹ Only part of the mosaic has survived but enough to suggest that the central panel was filled with scattered motifs: a small bird amid foliage, a vine flowing from a krater, bunches of grapes, and rudimentary baskets. This diffuse approach to composition, without depth or central focus, was reminiscent of a genre in North Africa also found on the vault of the mausoleum of Santa Costanza in Rome.¹³² One section of the border at Fraga spells out a word: 'Fortu – natus'. This is normally taken to be the name of the owner of the villa and commissioner of the mosaic. As the letters are separated by a chrismon, it is usually argued that this owner was a Christian. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha and omega, hang from the monogram, although in this case they hang in reverse; this is a peculiarity that is also found on some North African funerary mosaics, and on terracotta plaques from Hispania and North Africa. The modifications in the western part of the villa may represent the first phase of a Christian oratory, perhaps with its own relics in the small crypt.¹³³ The collection and exchange of both bodily and contact (*brandea*) relics between Christian members of the elite was certainly fashionable at this period, even though most of the documentary evidence for it comes from Gaul and Italy.¹³⁴ In the later fifth century a separate eastern chapel was added, a semi-circle inscribed in a square, where an altar table held relics in a compartment (*loculus*), and a baptismal font was installed at the west end. This sequence may exemplify the way in which

Christianity became increasingly visible from the late fourth to the fifth centuries.¹³⁵

The Fifth Century

In 391 Emperor Theodosius I passed legislation that outlawed pagan cults, including sacrifice. Christianity had come a long way since the persecutions ordered by Diocletian and Galerius. By 311 Galerius had issued the Edict of Toleration from his capital, Milan, giving Christians toleration and some restitution of confiscated property. The refusal of committed Christians to sacrifice to the imperial cult had been finally circumvented by acknowledging that the rights of the emperor and the commonwealth could be served just as well if the Christian god was solicited on their behalf. For most of the century toleration applied equally to all kinds of paganism leading to a rich mix of religions and their artistic expression. By the end of the fourth century, however, Christianity was the official religion of the Empire. The ban of pagan sacrifice may have had unforeseen consequences for public monuments, as in 399 the sons of Theodosius, Honorius and Arcadius addressed a law to Macrobius, *vicarius* of the diocese of Hispania in Mérida: 'In the same way that we prohibit sacrifices, in the same way, we require that the ornaments of those public buildings be preserved. If any persons should attempt to destroy such works, he shall not have the right to flatter himself as relying on any authority ...' (Theodosian Code, 16.10.15).¹³⁶ Although this suggests an extreme situation in which pagan temples were pulled down by a Christian mob, that is unlikely to have been the truth. Pagan temples remained dominant parts of the urban topography, and

131 Godoy, 1995, 227-37.

132 Dunbabin, 1999, 249; Germain, 1979, 169-87; Parrish, 1980, 229-39.

133 Ripoll, 2000, 75-78.

134 Bowes, 2005b, 227; Bowes, 2011.

135 Ripoll, 2000, 75-77.

136 Keay, 1988, 196; Arce, 2011a, 196-97.

the Theodosian Code recommended the use of crosses or chrismons to Christianise them. Graffiti on the Temple of Augustus at Mérida may be an example of that in practice, although the Code doubtless intended something more monumental.¹³⁷ Even so, the temples were not commandeered for the Christian cult, which began to emerge from villas and town houses, but initially concentrated its architectural expression around the burial places of martyrs (*martyria*), or other important Christian figures, outside city walls.

At the same period there was a flowering of celebratory Christian texts, many of them written by two poets with Iberian connections, Paulinus and Prudentius.¹³⁸ They and their associates crafted images of their society, and of the emperors, that have persisted over centuries. Paulinus (c. 354-431) had been born in Aquitaine, and studied there with the poet Ausonius. His family was wealthy and had estates not only near Bordeaux, but also in northeast Spain and at Nola (Naples) in Italy, where he finally settled. His network of *amicitia* was wide, and he corresponded both with Augustine of Hippo and with Sulpicius Severus, who wrote a life of the saintly soldier Martin of Tours.¹³⁹ Paulinus's own works were mainly letters or poems written to mark the anniversaries of the martyr Felix of Nola, his patron saint, but one of his earliest was a panegyric to John the Baptist. This poem plays with classical forms and at the same moment rejects them, ambivalence typical of this period of Christian literature.¹⁴⁰ Prudentius (c. 348-c. 413) a lawyer from the province of Tarragona, and a provincial governor, was summoned to the court of Emperor Theodosius. Towards the

end of his life he returned to his homeland where he led the life of an ascetic, a philosopher, and a prolific author. His works drew on his rhetorical training in their use of personifications and oppositions, and were written with a vivid and almost mannerist imagination.¹⁴¹ His highly influential *Liber Peristephanon* was a book of fourteen lyric poems that hymned not only Roman martyrs but also several from Spain: Fructuosus of Tarragona, Eulalia of Mérida, Vincent of Valencia, Emeterius and Chelidonius of Calahorra, and the eighteen martyrs of Zaragoza. He also wrote a diatribe against Symmachus, who wished to have the altar of victory returned to the Senate in Rome. The *Psychomachia* ('The Battle for the Soul'), his most popular text, dramatically recounted the struggle of Faith and the Cardinal Virtues against Idolatry and the Vices; its success was to last throughout the Middle Ages. The networks of these poets and their inventive engagement with Christian texts are also occasionally reflected in the art produced in fifth-century Spain.

Paulus Orosius (c. 375-c. 418) certainly visited Braga (northern Portugal) and may have been born there. Also educated in classical learning and rhetoric, he used it in his *Seven Books Against the Pagans* to present a positive view of his world, where Christianity had finally triumphed over paganism, even if the barbarians who had once supported the empire were now running amok and in 410 had even sacked Rome.¹⁴² The first six books, covering earlier periods of Roman history, attempt to show that, although 'Spain has been invaded and has suffered slaughter and devastation', similar attacks had been experienced under pagan rule. The barbarians are portrayed as potential clients (*socii*) and friends (*amici*), part

137 Arce, 2011a, 205.

138 Cameron, 2011, 351.

139 Binns, 1974, 100-33.

140 Cameron, 2011, 351; Green, 1971, 21-22.

141 Levine, 1991, 5-38.

142 van Nuffelen, 2012, 1-2.

of an extended network of *amicitia*.¹⁴³ Orosius puts a speech into the mouth of the Visigothic leader, Ataulf, that encapsulates what he hoped would be a reality. Ataulf declares that he has given up the idea of a Gothic state and instead has 'chosen the different glory of reviving the Roman name with Gothic vigour', and hopes 'to be acknowledged by posterity as the initiator of a Roman restoration' (Orosius, 7.43).¹⁴⁴ In the early years of the fifth century, this could have seemed a possible outcome, as the stable years of Emperor Theodosius's rule were not so far in the past. Ataulf had married Galla Placidia, the half-sister of Emperor Honorius, after she was seized during the sack of Rome. In the Orosian view, this provided an opportunity for her to advise him on good government. Ataulf was assassinated in 415, by which time the couple was in Barcelona. Galla Placidia was eventually returned to her family, but the Visigoths continued to fight for the emperor against the Sueves, Alans and Vandals who had occupied most of the northwest of the peninsula. Over this period the tax system was faltering, with attacks on many of the provinces resulting in their being unable to remit the usual amounts.¹⁴⁵ Both emperors and potential usurpers, of whom there were many, had to resort to other methods of payment or non-payment for military service. According to Orosius, in 407 one of these challengers, Constantine III, allowed the barbarians 'who had at one time been received as allies and drawn into military service ... to plunder the plains of *Pallantia* as a reward for their victory' (Orosius, 7.40).¹⁴⁶ The villa of La Olmeda was on the plains of *Pallantia*, although there is no evidence that it was attacked at this

time. A triangular belt buckle, decorated with a form of chiselled decoration (*Kerbschnitt*), was found in the excavations. As the buckle is a type worn by officers in both military and civil administration, it is not sufficient to confirm the presence of a military force at the villa.¹⁴⁷ Payment in lieu of taxes could also be made in land, and such transactions may explain the abandonment and reuse of some villas during the fifth century.¹⁴⁸ During the previous century, residential spaces had already been adapted for small-scale industry in coastal villas, when rooms were taken over for oil presses and tanks.¹⁴⁹ In others there is no evidence of change, and they may have continued in Hispano-Roman occupation.

Artistic production still occurs in villas during this period, although it is minuscule in comparison with the output of the fourth century. One mosaic from the rural villa at Baños de Valdearados (Burgos), between the river Duero and the old Roman city of Clunia, may best be seen in this context. Usually dated to the early fifth century, it lacks the refinement of many fourth-century mosaics, but it exhibits a confident vivacity that marks it out as something different, not inferior. In 2012 sections of the main panel were gouged out and stolen, severely damaging an important depiction of Bacchus in triumph. The iconography of the theme was well established, and mosaics of Bacchus and his chariot could be found in North Africa and in Hispania in earlier centuries. The design of the mosaic at Baños is distinct from those, not only because of its style but also because of the arrangement in two registers. In the surviving upper scene a half-naked Bacchus

143 Orosius, 2010, 7.41, 406-407.

144 Translation from Williams, 1985, 218; see also Collins, 2006, 26.

145 Ward-Perkins, 2005, 42-43.

146 Sanz Serrano, 2007, 443-80.

147 Abásolo, 1996, 25-36.

148 Chavarría, 2007; Chavarría, 2008, 93-122; and Chavarría, 2006, 17-35; Ripoll, 2000, 65-114.

149 For example at Vilauba, Castanyer Masoliver, 2001-2002, 159-76; and more widely, Chavarría, 2004, 67-102.

dances with a group of female bacchantes, his *thiasos*, to the music of a horn-player shown in the top right-hand corner. The second scene in the lower register used to show a triumphant Bacchus and Ariadne in his chariot pulled by leopardesses. Pan stood behind them playing his pipes, whilst the white ground was scattered with birds and objects. An ivy-leaf scroll spills out from two urns in the lower corners of the border to enclose birds and busts of a man and woman, presumably the *dominus* and his wife. In a much more abstract style, this mosaic emulates the apogee of Hispanic mosaics at La Olmeda, from the position of the horn player to the portraits in the border. The strong modelling of the bodies, even though inaccurate, is also a feature shared with the figures in the Achilles mosaic at La Olmeda, and the leopardesses are especially well defined. But in the dance scene at Baños the mannered drapery of the La Olmeda artist has turned into a series of extravagant linear units.¹⁵⁰ The geometric border is enlivened by six panels of dogs hunting; four of the dogs are labelled, as at Carranque, but at Baños the names are those of the winds, *Eurus*, *Zefyrus*, *Notus*, and *Boreas*, a witticism more traditionally used for horses.¹⁵¹ In the four corners of this mosaic, a position traditionally occupied by personifications of the seasons, are busts of four unidentified male figures carrying spears. This martial theme is taken up in a nearby room, where the pattern of another mosaic is formed by a circle of shields with diverse ornament, a motif that has no parallel in western Europe at that time. Thus the taste of the residents of Baños de Valdearados shared some elements with that of their fourth-century predecessors, but they chose a mythological theme that was open to Christian interpretation and they emphasised

a new militarism.¹⁵² There is no other evidence that they were even nominally Christian. The artists that they engaged to make the mosaic knew and understood the values of a great work like the Achilles mosaic of La Olmeda, but worked within their own technical limitations to produce a piece that matched the taste of their patrons.

Hydatius (c. 400-c. 469), bishop of Chaves in the northwest (*Aquae Flaviae*), belonged to the generation after Orosius. Author of a chronicle, or perhaps more accurately an annal, with an apocalyptic view of events in the empire up to 468, he described the barbarians as raging wildly (*debacchantibus per Hispanias barbaris*) across the provinces of Spain and talks of four plagues: weapons, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, which have forced the *Hispani* in the towns and fortified villas (*castella*) into servitude.¹⁵³ Vandals, Alans, and Suevi had invaded the northwest of the peninsula in 409 and settled; the Vandals and Alans moved on to North Africa, but the Suevi were to stay in Galicia and eventually be absorbed into a Visigothic kingdom.¹⁵⁴ It is notable that heresy was perceived to be as much a threat as violence. Hydatius records specific events, including the scorn poured on the martyr St. Eulalia in Mérida (429) and, in the east of the peninsula, what was to be the last entry into Hispania of a Roman emperor, Majorian, in 460.¹⁵⁵ He also provides exceptional information on envoys who went between the representatives of the emperor, both in the east and west, the Sueves, the Vandals, and the Goths. Indeed Hydatius was one himself.¹⁵⁶ Considerable

¹⁵⁰ Arce, 2008a, 143-45.

¹⁵¹ López Monteagudo, 1999, 41-60.

¹⁵² For the elusive culture of *virī militares*, see Brown, 2000 and Salzman, 2000, 347-62.

¹⁵³ Burgess, 1993; Arce, 2005, 235-37.

¹⁵⁴ Collins, 2006, 10-15.

¹⁵⁵ Arce, 2005a, 234-40.

¹⁵⁶ Gillett, 2003, 36-50, 78-83.

etiquette surrounded these negotiations. Diplomatic letters were often written in the form of friendship letters (*amicitia*) and embassies were given hospitality. The exchange of gifts played an important role, both between the main parties and between the ambassadors.¹⁵⁷ Most significantly for later chapters of this book, the gifts could involve the exchange of people, sometimes the return of captives but also other figures, like the 'entertainer' Zercon the Moor, who was passed between rulers as a gift.¹⁵⁸ Hydatius's account reads like a litany of chaos, but the archaeological record does little to support this view, as there is almost no evidence of burning or destruction. On the contrary, the Vandals, Alans, and Suevi left no evidence of their occupation, probably because they lived like Hispano-Romans. Yet we should not dismiss Hydatius's subjective account as merely inaccurate, as it reveals a genuine perception of the dismantling of a culture. Whatever the Christian apologists claimed, Hydatius was right to see loss. It is apparent visually in another mosaic, found in Mérida, depicting a Bacchic scene in which Dionysus comes across the sleeping Ariadne. Here the Bacchic frenzy has lost all sense of centre. Four figures range across the surface, an awkwardly inclining Ariadne, a dancing satyr, a nude bacchante and, to the right, a larger clothed figure, perhaps Bacchus himself. A leopard in an artificial pose, and disks, strewn haphazardly, fill the voids left in the design.¹⁵⁹ The workshop of Anniponus (*ex officina Anniponi*) signed the work, thus asserting an expert status which is at variance with the execution but in line with the aspirations of the patron to own an authentic representation of *paideia*. The mosaicist had the technical skill required to make

and lay tesserae, and knew which iconographic elements to include. Without the ability to translate the wish of his patrons into a narrative design, he employed the scatter principle, found in the backgrounds of other mosaics, to the main subject. It is uncertain whether this was intentional, or denoted merely an inability to draw in the traditional manner or even to copy, as a number of models were close to hand.¹⁶⁰ The scene manages to capture a sense of movement, but the overriding impression is one of disorder.

Two other mosaics demonstrate this disintegration of an artistic tradition; they come from rural villas at opposite ends of the peninsula, Estada, near Huesca, and Santisteban del Puerto (Jaén). The Estada mosaic includes an inscription of verses from the story of Aeneas and Dido in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, but this explicit engagement with the tradition of *paideia* is juxtaposed with a jumble of crudely drawn images.¹⁶¹ A rudimentary male figure, barely recognisable as human, stands under a pediment; to his right, a bust of a woman is placed under a vine; disks, roundels, a swastika, and palm leaves fill the space above them. This piece seems to be employing a series of signs that once belonged to a narrative, but have lost their ability to connect meaningfully. The inclusion of the vine, victory palms, and a dove under a pediment suggest that the patron or craftsman may have been more familiar with them as Christian signs. Dogged proof of the ability to write, and therefore read, is a constant feature of these mosaics, and the large mosaic found at Santisteban del Puerto also has an inscription (fig. 34). Two panels of an original three have survived. On the left is the story of Apollo and Marsyas from Ovid's

157 Gillett, 2003, 256-59.

158 Tougher, 2010, 140.

159 Dunbabin, 1999, 158.

160 Dunbabin, 1999, 284-85.

161 For the lasting importance of inscriptions, see Stirling, 2005, 10-11.

Figure 34 Santisteban del Puerto, mosaic with Achilles on Skyros, (Museo de Jaén)



Metamorphoses. The depiction is almost monochrome with an emphasis on the outline of the figures and only irregular lines to indicate agitated drapery and the flayed Marsyas. A larger scene to the right, of which only the lower half survives, depicts Achilles on Skyros with an inscription that attempts to explain the content, but betrays considerable mythological confusion. The classical forms that inspired the border designs and the figurative scenes are still recognisable but deformed and debased. The choice of subjects in these fifth-century mosaics suggests an awareness of some of the finest mosaics in the peninsula and a desire to emulate them, but a drastic loss of the expertise required to execute their design and drawing, perhaps because, even if the materials and the labour were local, the masters who realised the ambitions of earlier patrons had come from abroad.

Fifth-century Churches

There is no incontrovertible evidence for the building of freestanding churches in Hispania during the fourth century. Most Christian communities in towns continued to use adapted houses (*domus*) for worship, just as those in the country used rooms in the villas. For example, the fourth-century Christian *domus* in Barcelona was probably extended in the early fifth century to provide a large episcopal hall, suitable for larger assemblies.¹⁶² Around the same time basilicas began to be constructed along the northeast coast in cemeteries outside cities, because this was where the tombs of holy dead were located. This process can be identified as far north as Empúries, where the town had been

¹⁶² Beltrán de Heredia, 2002; Bonnet, 2002, 74-93.

largely abandoned, but the tomb of a Christian leader became the focus of a basilica by the early fifth century.¹⁶³ The structure was built on the earlier foundations of a bath complex. Many debates remain unresolved concerning its precise chronology and functions, but almost 500 tombs, including some high quality sarcophagi imported from Narbonne, clustered around the now unknown saint. At the same period, a Christian community at San Cugat (*Castrum Octavianum*), outside Barcelona, raised a small basilica alongside a mausoleum.¹⁶⁴ It is traditionally associated with a North African called Cucuphas supposedly martyred on the site.

Likewise Terrassa (*Egara*), inland from Barcelona, became a centre of Christian practice. This has always been a controversial site, and the conclusions of recent excavators are no less problematic, as they believe they have identified a fourth-century church and see this complex as essentially unchanged since the fifth century, except for evident medieval interventions.¹⁶⁵ Above the cascade of the Vallparadís on the edge of the Roman town, this site was arranged on three terraces, descending north to south, possibly linked to small-scale industrial use of the strong water flow. The discovery of storage silos and a kiln on the east side have been linked to such activity. The site has several compartments that were lined with *opus signinum*, one dated by Constantinian (330-363) coins found in the drainage, and a second similarly by Theodosian coins (378-383). At what point one, or more, of these was converted for use as a baptismal font remains a matter of debate. A *domus* occupied from the Roman period probably became the

bishop's residence, when Egara gained episcopal status in c. 450-460. Around that time the complex had two churches, one main church now dedicated to St. Mary and a second to St. Peter, and a funerary building. None of these is accorded Roman origins, despite the plan of the funerary structure resembling a Roman mausoleum with a niche at each corner (tetraconch). The church of Sant Pere (St. Peter) has a trilobed apse and a unique altarpiece that is usually dated to the eleventh century. It contains six niches, two above the other four, which resemble a columbarium of the Roman period, a comparison that might have seemed implausible except that recent pigment analysis of paint on the altarpiece has found Egyptian blue, which was not used in the peninsula after the Roman period.¹⁶⁶ The archaeology of the site is highly complex, and most of the current arguments are based on stratigraphic readings. Many burials covered the site from the second half of the fourth century, and one or more of them may have had high social or religious status. A mosaic floor, including a funerary inscription to a certain Securus, was laid in what is now the church of St. Mary. It is dated to the middle of the fourth century by coins, similar in date to those at Coscojuela. Over the fifth and sixth centuries the complex evolved from one that had been determined by earlier use of the site into a recognisable ecclesiastical arrangement around a courtyard. As part of this, the main church had three aisles, a tripartite chancel with apses, and a baptistery at the west end. The Roman town of Egitania, now Idanha-a-Velha in Portugal, was also transformed into a bishopric in late antiquity, and recent work on its buildings may provide useful comparative material.¹⁶⁷

163 Nolla, 1995.

164 Bowes, 2005b, 195 and 211.

165 García i Llinares, 2009, with an abstract in English, 201-14.

166 Lluveras, 2010, 308-19.

167 Morin de Pablos, 2014; Fernandes, 2006, 49-72.

The much larger Christian cemetery at Francolí, outside Tarragona, has also been the subject of a new series of excavations.¹⁶⁸ As a result, an earlier date has been assigned to the two three-aisled basilicas added to the complex, based on analysis of pottery fragments, which suggest the beginning of the fifth century. The largest basilica, now named for the martyr St. Fructuosus, was large (40 x 25m) and had three aisles, a semi-circular apse, and a transept. It was set amongst some 3000 burials, both within its walls and beyond them. The tombs were densely packed and some were even superimposed, perhaps in their desire to be close to the martyrs. The relationship between the tombs and mausolea in the cemeteries, before the construction of the basilica, and the tombs and mausolea added after its construction, is highly complex. It now seems that the mausolea that flank the sanctuary may be additions. On the north side of the apse an unusual underground mausoleum, which once had funerary mosaics, was connected to the basilica by a subterranean passage, presumably a way of making more direct contact with the relics. To the north, a second basilica is often known as the basilica of Thecla, after the tombstone of a 77-year-old Egyptian woman, 'virgin of Christ', who was buried there, although she was probably a devotee and not a martyr. This basilica is located across the road from a suburban Roman villa that had been abandoned by the mid-fifth century.¹⁶⁹ Burials are organised within formal spaces: a privileged burial lies in what may be a counter-apse and another seven tombs occupy the raised sanctuary. Within the nave and a large western atrium tombs are laid in rows. Amongst the approximately 200 burials there is a preponderance of older men

in their 60s and 70s, perhaps priests, buried before the main apse, whereas the women are fewer in number, mostly between 15 and 29 years of age, and some in double burials with a man. Architecturally, the northern basilica is remarkable not only for its raised square sanctuary and its funerary counter-apse but also for its transept raised about 40 cm above the nave. Counter-apses and counter-choirs are often thought to be sixth-century features, but the example at Francolí may suggest that the practice occurred earlier.¹⁷⁰ The most exceptional feature of the northern basilica is the western atrium arranged around a central courtyard. The building techniques used in the atrium and in the basilica differ, as the foundations of the former are trenches of stone and clay, whereas some of the basilica foundations contain ashlar and other reused elements. From aerial photography it seems possible that a structure related to the villa could have formed the basis for the atrium, which would account for the unique structure itself and for the square 'counter-apse'. According to that theory, the basilica would have been an extension to the earlier building, but the excavators argue for contemporary construction as a solution to the complex archaeological problems. In Mérida, the provincial capital, another basilica was erected in a cemetery on the outskirts of the city, probably in the late fifth century. It encompassed earlier mausolea, notably one belonging to a *vir illustris* called Gregorius, the only raised funerary structure permitted in the nave.¹⁷¹ In the apse it covered what was believed to be the tomb of the martyr, St. Eulalia.¹⁷² Steps in a narrow transept on the south side led to a crypt reserved for the burial of bishops. The internal decoration of these

168 López Vilar, 2006; Macías Solé, 2013, in particular, López Vilar, 2013, 149-162; Kulikowski, 2004, 221-23.

169 López Vilar, 2006, 291, 298 and 301.

170 Godoy, 1995, 66-87; Bowes, 2005b, 200-201, and 204.

171 Bowes, 2005b, 204.

172 Mateos, 1999; Gómez Fernández, 2003, 263-79.

basilicas has been lost, and there is no indication that it was particularly rich. At Francolí, finely carved Christian sarcophagi helped to define one space from another.

Fifth-century sarcophagi

In the early fifth century members of the Tarragonese elite purchased a new style of sarcophagus, particularly fine versions of sarcophagi with strigillated panels and figures, often apostles, standing at either end. The example known as the sarcophagus of Leocadius shows a bearded St. Peter on the left receiving his authority (*traditio legis*) from the Hand of God in the form of a scroll marked with a chrismon (fig. 35). At the opposite end of the

sarcophagus is a depiction of the Sacrifice of Abraham. Another, known as the Apostles sarcophagus, has a carving of St. Peter standing between two looped curtains on the left, again portrayed with a beard and wearing a *pallium*; at the other end stands St. Paul.¹⁷³ It was once thought that these sarcophagi were produced locally, but recent stone analysis has shown that they were imported from Carthage. The Carthaginian stone from Jebel Er Rorouf is very similar in appearance and constitution to the 'Santa Tecla' stone from Tarragona, so the decision to import related presumably to the lack of local carving expertise in this part of Hispania.¹⁷⁴ In the late fourth century, and especially during the fifth, the cities on the east coast of Hispania continued to trade with the cities of North Africa, especially with Carthage. At first North Africa was untouched by the invasions that had disrupted the economy of Rome and well placed to take over the supply of sarcophagi. The Vandals' occupation of Carthage from 439 does not seem to have greatly affected that trade. Letters were also exchanged between churchmen in Hispania and North Africa. An open letter from Severus, bishop of Minorca, presents an anti-Jewish narrative and claims mass conversion of the Jewish population on the island. Once thought to have been written in the tenth century, the given date of this text, AD 418, is now accepted, although the rhetorical nature of its contents remains problematic.¹⁷⁵ It was probably composed with the assistance of Consentius, who corresponded with Augustine at Hippo. This letter attests to the presence of Jewish people in Hispania at this period, which, however likely it may seem, is otherwise difficult to prove.

Figure 35 Tarragona, sarcophagus of Leocadius (Museu i Necròpolis Palaecristians, Tarragona)



¹⁷³ Harlow, 2004, 62-63.

¹⁷⁴ Rodà, 2001, 65.

¹⁷⁵ Bradbury, 1996, 135-36.

Local production has been proposed for other sarcophagi found in Hispania, which have been assigned to the fifth or early sixth centuries on the basis of form and style.¹⁷⁶ This reflects more fragmented artistic production across the peninsula. One possible group comes from the area south of Córdoba and includes whole or fragmentary examples from Écija, toward Seville; Antequera, towards Málaga; and Alcaudete, towards Jaén. Another fragment from Los Pedroches (Chimorra Mountains), north of Córdoba, may also belong to this group. These sarcophagi have yet to be subjected to stone analysis and, although they appear to be made in local stone, one or more of them could have been imported via Málaga. In each case figurative decoration in very low relief occupies the front panel. The carving on the Écija sarcophagus depicts the Sacrifice of Abraham, the Good Shepherd, and Daniel in the Lions' Den, all familiar scenes signifying the Resurrection and found on earlier sarcophagi. Each image is highlighted against a generous plain ground and labelled in Greek, which raises questions about the origin of the sarcophagus and its purchaser. The Alcaudete sarcophagus (Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 309) is different in style and design with clusters of elongated figures. It has two registers: an extended narrative of the Raising of Lazarus fills the upper section and the battle between David and Goliath is portrayed below, alongside a vignette of Daniel in the Lions' Den. None of these depictions relates closely to earlier treatments on sarcophagi. Whilst the sculptor did not demonstrate great technical skill, considerable imagination was applied to the design. Lois Drewer has related this unusual juxtaposition to the version of the Raising of Lazarus in the *Carmen Paschale* of the fifth-century poet

176 Rodríguez Oliva, 2001b, 145-54; Rodríguez Oliva, 2001a, 107-28; Oepen, 2001, 264-65.

Sedulius from Seville.¹⁷⁷ This biblical epic in five books was based on the Gospels but also drew on Virgil and borrowed from the earlier work of Juvenius, showing that whoever planned this sarcophagus was familiar with this type of exegesis in verse, which amplified the drama of the story.¹⁷⁸

Around the same time, to the northwest of Logroño (La Rioja) on the upper reaches of the river Ebro, another group of sarcophagi was carved in an area known as La Bureba, outside the old Roman town of Briviesca, hewn from local granite, and probably by local craftsmen.¹⁷⁹ Unusually, the sculpted decoration covers all four sides, which suggests that the sarcophagi were displayed in a space where viewers could circulate. Another possibility is that the decoration was deemed primarily thaumaturgic and operated to ward off evil spirits, its viewing by the living being unimportant. For the most part these sarcophagi use explicitly Christian iconography, although the precise identification of some scenes is contested. The example that has attracted most attention comes from Poza de la Sal and is now in the Museo de Burgos. One face depicts the scenes of Moses receiving the Law, the Good Shepherd, and the Sacrifice of Abraham, but the narratives on the opposite face and the ends of the sarcophagus are harder to interpret.¹⁸⁰ Suggestions have included the betrothal of Joseph to Mary, and Joachim, Mary's father, before the high priest alongside the first dream-vision of St. Perpetua, a third-century martyr from Carthage (fig. 36). This latter identification depends largely on the portrayal of a ladder held by two figures in the centre of this side of the sarcophagus. St. Perpetua's *Passio* described how she was

177 Drewer, 2002, 151-159; see also AMS, 1993, no. 2, 46.

178 Springer, 1988; and Green, 2006.

179 Oepen, 2001, 265.

180 Schlunk, 1978, 141-43 and plate 43.

Figure 36 La Bureba sarcophagus, Poza de la Sal (Museo de Burgos)



imprisoned in a dungeon prior to her martyrdom, when she had a vision of a ladder leading up to heaven. Stepping on the head of the dragon-devil, she climbs up to green meadows and to the Good Shepherd who is grazing his sheep. She declares that the dragon will not hurt her, 'In the name of Jesus Christ'.¹⁸¹ This story is found only in apocryphal texts that circulated mainly in the east but also in North Africa. The figures on the sarcophagus are reduced to almost geometric forms, although more attention is paid to the heads, but the scenes are firmly grounded on the moulding that runs around the sarcophagus. A schematic basket, a chrismon, and a palm tree are strewn across the upper area, as across a mosaic, yet the trees that flank the scene and two hares or rabbits that inhabit it are strongly imagined. Tarragona also produced a few local sarcophagi in the fifth century, but they were simplified versions of the strigillated models with mainly vertical fluting and central garlanded panels in low relief where inscriptions could be added.¹⁸² Other candidates for local production are more debatable, especially as sarcophagi can be moved at any time. In the northwest

these include the Aquitanian sarcophagus with a chrismon carved on one end, now in Braga cathedral; the virtuosic acanthus scroll and inscription of the Ithacius sarcophagus lid, now in Oviedo Cathedral; and the strigillated sarcophagus, now at Villanueva de Lorenzana (Lugo).¹⁸³

The Arrival of the Visigoths

During the fifth century, the people known as the western Goths or 'Visigoths' gradually infiltrated the peninsula, evolving from military defenders into occupiers. Despite the use of the label 'Visigoths', this group did not have one ethnic identity, but had coalesced around the Danube during the last quarter of the fourth century in military service under Emperor Theodosius.¹⁸⁴ They constituted a barbarian confederacy that, after the death of Theodosius in 395, operated as a mercenary army in the service of whichever emperor or usurper could pay them. It is likely that they travelled with their families, and may have numbered no more than 30,000 in total. In 418, Constantius, Galla Placidia's new husband and her brother,

¹⁸¹ Robinson, Joseph, 2004; the text is a facsimile of Cambridge 1891, 181; 28; Farina, 2009, 160-61.

¹⁸² Rodà, 2001, 70-71.

¹⁸³ AMS, 1993, cat. no.1, 45; Moráis Morán, 2013, 303-306.

¹⁸⁴ Collins, 2006, 20-24.

Honorius's general, settled these Visigoths in Aquitaine. Whilst remaining ready to fight, they were given land to farm in an area that stretched from Toulouse to the coast above Bordeaux.¹⁸⁵

With the end of the Theodosian dynasty in 455, the Visigoths supported another emperor but after the last western Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed in 476, their effective autonomy was recognised. Hispania was no longer officially governed from Rome, and the Visigothic King Euric (466-84) saw his opportunity and launched a two-pronged attack. His army came over the western Pyrenees, took Pamplona, and went down the valley of the Ebro to seize Zaragoza. A second force came down the *Via Augusta* to take the coastal cities and to lay siege to Tarragona.¹⁸⁶ Over the next twenty years Euric went on to claim the rest of the peninsula except for the lands still held by the Suevi. From the middle of the fifth century there are clear signs of economic collapse and encroachment in the peninsula. Groups of people were almost camping in some of the villas, and the dead were buried alongside the living and not in separate mausolea.¹⁸⁷ Rough materials were used to sub-divide buildings with no regard for their original functions.¹⁸⁸ Cities like Tarragona, Barcelona, Braga, and Mérida continued to be occupied. Some small towns even grew in importance: Egara and Tarazona (Turiaso) became bishoprics and Empúries revived. Others, like Clunia, lost status. The peninsula became increasingly fragmented, and communities managed in different ways. In 483 a priest-bishop (*sacerdos* and *pontifex*) called Zeno, and a certain Salla, designated as *dux*, rebuilt the walls of Mérida

and repaired its bridge over the river Guadiana; presumably it had been damaged during the incursions mentioned by Hydatius. This was recorded in an inscription that is now known from an eighth-century manuscript.¹⁸⁹ The metrical text bemoans the ruined antiquity of the bridge (*ruinosa vetustas*) and the loss of the route over it. It goes on to acknowledge the magnanimity of Salla who may have funded the project or provided manpower, as his name is specifically to be added to the list of benefactors (*tituli*). The whole renovation is attributed to the collaborative zeal of the *dux* and the bishop. The inscription extols the renewal of the bridge arcades and excellent city walls, but from the surviving sections it is clear that the walls were repaired with reused material including large granite ashlar, column bases, and old epitaphs. The involvement of the *dux* Salla has led to much speculation about his role and position, and he may be the same Goth called Salla mentioned by Hydatius as ambassador to the Suevi in 466.¹⁹⁰ The inscription shows that Salla and Zeno both saw themselves acting in the classical tradition of euergetism, good deeds undertaken by the wealthy for the public good. However, it was the bishops who were to have control of the city into the sixth century.

In 507, the Franks defeated the Visigoths at Vouillé, near Carcassonne. Theodoric, the king of the Ostrogoths (r. 471-526), came to the aid of his Visigothic allies, but too late to maintain their independence or to save their capital, Toulouse. The Visigoths retreated to the province of *Narbonensis*, around Narbonne, and began to focus their attention even more on the Iberian Peninsula. Theodoric took the Visigoths' treasure to Ravenna for safekeeping. This was the wealth they had accumulated as payment and loot over the last century,

185 Burns, 1992, 53-63.

186 Collins, 1995a, 24.

187 Arce, 2007b, 305-36.

188 Christie, 2004, 1-37.

189 Arce, 2008b, 121-26; Kulikowski, 2004, 243.

190 Thompson, 1982, 190-91.

the repository of their memory and identity, including a gold *missorium* given to King Thorismund (r. 451-453) by the Roman Aetius.¹⁹¹ For the next sixteen years the Visigothic kingdom was administered from Ravenna. Theodoric had grown up as a hostage in Constantinople and built many of the surviving churches of Ravenna, including San Vitale and the Arian baptistery, as well as commissioning their magnificent mosaics, all in imitation of the capital of the Eastern Empire. But there is no evidence that any of those craftsmen came to work in the Iberian Peninsula. Theudis, an Ostrogoth who governed the peninsula between 531 and 548, provides a rare glimpse into the social complexities of the first half of the sixth century. Married to a rich aristocratic Hispano-Roman woman, he had access to a private army of 2000 slaves via her estates.¹⁹² Some of the Hispano-Romans and Goths were clearly living a late 'late antique' life in the great villas. A rich legacy of residential buildings survived from the fourth century with decoration and furnishing

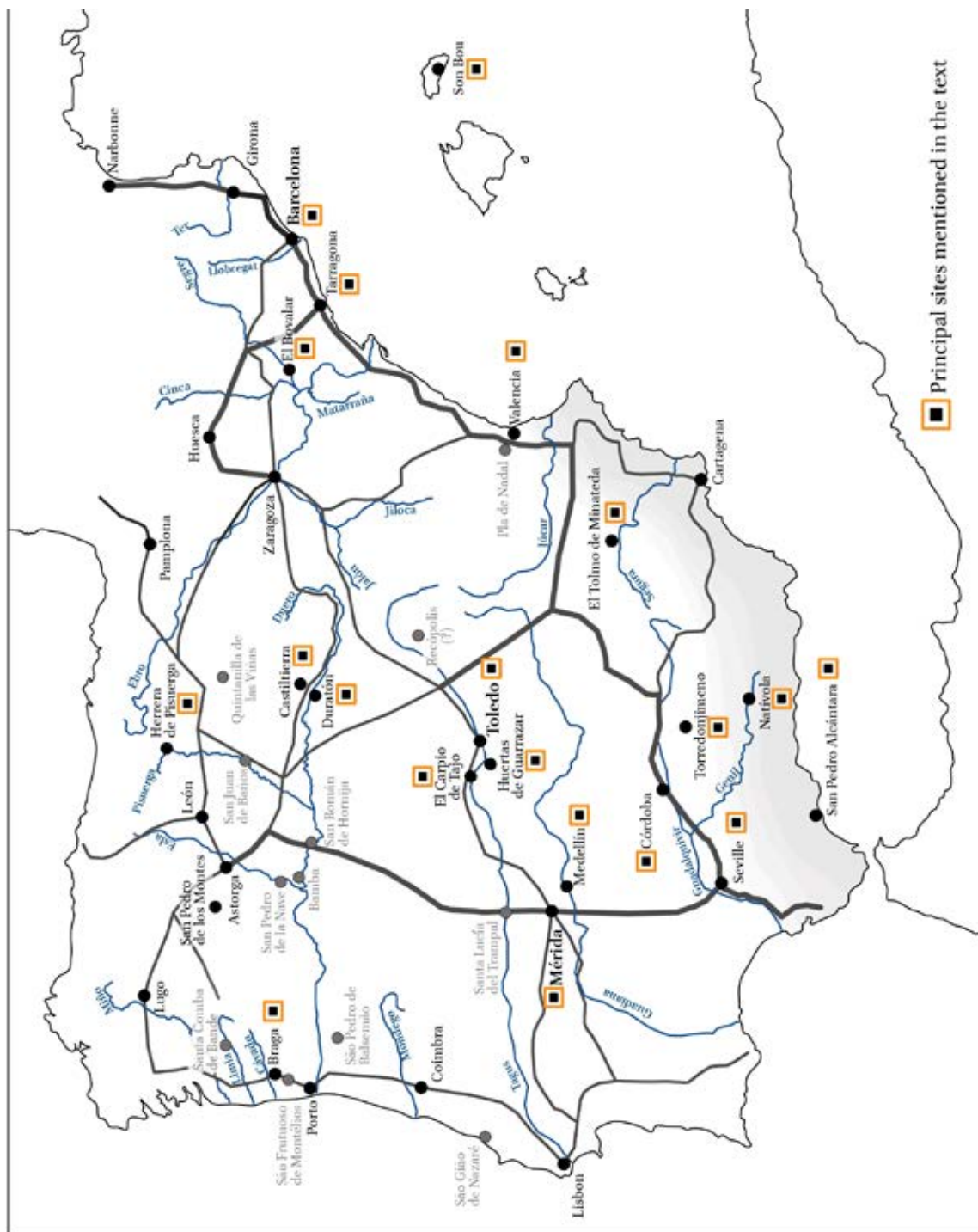
acquired through a Mediterranean-wide social network. These surroundings – embodying the elite pretensions to learning (*paideia*), the expression of their social cohesion – were all the more impressive because they could no longer be produced. With Theudis's death came the end of what historians have called the 'Ostrogothic interval', characterised by a lack of documentary, archaeological, and artistic evidence. Depending on the dates assigned to some of the later buildings and mosaics considered in this chapter, the second half of the fifth century and the first half of the sixth may be a period of artistic silence in the peninsula, at best a few mutterings compared with the confident expositions of the previous century. This tends to support the view of those like Bryan Ward-Perkins, who see the fall of Rome as an economic and cultural catastrophe.¹⁹³ The next chapter will consider how those who occupied the peninsula over the sixth and seventh centuries attempted to maintain and reinvent what they had inherited.

191 Collins, 2006, 78; for an overview of royal treasure in this period, see Hardt, 1998, 255-80.

192 Collins, 2006, 42-43; Procopius, 1967, 5.12.50-54; Cassiodorus, 1992, 5.39.

193 Ward-Perkins, 2005; Liebeschuetz, 2001, 233-38, 238-245 with responses from Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins, Mark Whittow and Luke Lavan.

Map IV Map of the Peninsula in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries



3 The Visigothic Period

Fragmentation and Accretion

Were the Visigoths exceptional builders and goldsmiths in the seventh century, or did they occupy pre-existing structures and acquire much of their metalwork? Did the Hispano-Romans preserve an unbroken Roman building tradition that set them apart from the other successor states of the empire? The range of answers that can be given to these questions will affect the rest of this book, because this problem bears patinas of ideological mystification that began in the eighth century and continue into the present. As Jerrilynn Dodds set out in her influential 1990 study, *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain*, such questions concern the personality of modern Spain and pervade its historiography.¹ The achievements of Visigothic Hispania were necessary for Sánchez-Albornoz's view of an unchanging Hispano-Roman essence that owed nothing to the Arabs or the Jews. He was prepared to accept only the rediscovery of earlier Roman traditions through contact with Byzantium. Américo Castro took the opposing view that saw the Spanish character moulded by interaction between Christians, Arabs, and Jews. The exchange of works of art, including the return of several Visigothic votive crowns between the governments of Franco and Pétain in 1941, says much for the enduring and problematic symbolism of Visigothic culture, especially in a mid-twentieth century context.²

In common with many scholars of medieval Spain, Dodds abjured the polarised debate between Sánchez-Albornoz and Américo Castro

by seeking a middle way. She maintained the role of the Visigoths as patrons and above all as unconscious agents of an architecture that reflected the divided nature of the peninsula's population.³ This was predicated on a corpus of material that is at the heart of this dispute, and by including what I shall call the expanded group (San Juan de Baños, Santa Comba de Bande, Santa María de Quintanilla de las Viñas, San Pedro de la Nave, São Frutuoso de Montélios, and São Gião de Nazaré), Dodds aligned herself with those who see the Visigothic period as one of remarkable artistic achievement. Within Spain, Luis Caballero Zoreda has led a re-dating debate from which has come a generation of scholars who are providing some new answers that will inform this chapter. By excluding most of the standing elements of the expanded group from the body of material under consideration here (see Chapter 5 for these monuments in the tenth century), I shall automatically be associating with those who deny the exceptional quality of the Visigothic achievement.⁴ Without the expanded group, the 'Visigothic' corpus comprises metalwork and a series of archaeological foundations accompanied by fragments of sculpture with mainly geometric and vegetal decoration. The fragmentary nature of the remaining body of material has its own allure. It has led to the dominance of archaeologists in this area, whose work is the main hope of resolution in the many contested sites that constitute this debate. Most of the sites were excavated from the

1 Dodds, 1990; Ripoll, 2009a, 256-76.

2 Eluère, 2001, 311-17; Perea, 2001a, 123-28; Ripoll, 1993, 53; Lozinski, 1976, 379-92.

3 Dodds, 1990, 11.

4 For an alternative view, see Chavarría, 2010b, 160-74.

eighteenth century onwards without modern scientific methods. Those excavations have left results open to widely differing interpretations and numerous objects without any reliable provenance. Even the iconic gold crowns of the Visigoths came to light as a treasure hoard and lack the crucial recording of the discovery. Indeed some elements of the hoard went astray between Toledo and Paris.

Recent archaeological studies have begun to provide more rigorous material and to reveal a fragmented pattern at a sub-regional level across the peninsula. Several of them have been helpfully summarised in Chris Wickham's *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (2005).⁵ Most of these studies deal with everyday material, especially ceramics, and not with the major standing monuments or the metalwork that form the corpus for art historical study. Regional variation will also be apparent in this body of material, which is likewise often fragmentary, but rarely in its original context and mostly in museums without secure provenance. This dislocation has implications for the interpretation, and even the identification, of the material. In the late antique period showpieces (*spolia*) from the past were incorporated into new structures – for example, on the Arch of Constantine in Rome – but in sixth and seventh century Spain and Portugal substantial buildings, or objects, from the late antique period were more often appropriated through additions or alterations. The balance had shifted to a situation in which the reused element was predominant. Perhaps this process might best be described as one of grafting.⁶ The extent of reuse in the Visigothic period, of both buildings and objects, suggests that it arose largely from necessity, that is, from an increasing scarcity of technical knowledge that amounted to a severe shortage by the

seventh century.⁷ Some building occurred in affluent pockets into the late sixth century, and elements of late 'late antique' taste persisted into the seventh, including admiration for showpieces and intricate work, as well as a willingness to juxtapose distinct styles.⁸ The dependency on reuse makes it difficult to assess where it constituted cultural choice, possibly with symbolic overtones, and went beyond the pragmatic redeployment of structures and materials. Imported objects, and perhaps immigrant craftsmen, embellish and complicate the picture.

A Mixed Population

The divided nature of the peninsula's population during this period is problematic.⁹ Both archaeologists and art historians have attempted to approach it ethnographically, often with inconclusive results. Two groups of people are usually identified: the indigenous Hispano-Romans, who formed the majority of more than a million, and the invaders, the Visigoths, who may have numbered only some 20,000.¹⁰ The ethnicity of these peoples is not a straightforward matter. As the last two chapters have shown, the Hispano-Roman population was already a mixture of peoples: Celtic, Iberian, Phoenician, Greek, and Roman. Together they had formed a receptive culture supported by a considerable range of skills in the fourth and early fifth centuries, which was eroded in the ensuing century. The Hispano-Romans had formed a political and social elite within the Roman Empire and they continued to be the proprietors of most of the large estates

⁵ Wickham, 2005.

⁶ Tronzo, 2009.

⁷ Lavan, 2007, xv-xl; Chavarría, 2010b, 163.

⁸ Elsner, 1998, 15-23; Elsner, 2006, 271-309.

⁹ Claude, 1999, 117-30.

¹⁰ Collins, 2006, 241.

across the peninsula. The second group, the peoples who identified themselves as Goths, were neither ethnically nor politically unified. After more than a century of military service for the Roman Empire, they had absorbed several aspects of the dress and status symbols of that army into their daily lives. To judge from the time that they spent in Aquitaine before arriving in Spain, they had no demonstrable tradition of building. Some scholars claim that they built the church of Sainte-Marie la Daurade in Toulouse, which survived with its elaborate mosaic programme into the eighteenth century, while others think the church was a late antique structure or built after the Franks conquered the city in 507. In either case the mosaic decoration was most likely carried out by craftsmen trained in Ravenna.¹¹ Nothing similar can be found in Spain from the Visigothic period. The most potent physical expression of Visigothic identity was their treasure, much of which was doubtless acquired through plunder, especially from their sack of Rome in 410. After the Visigoths' defeat at Vouillé in Aquitaine in 507, where they were in danger of losing their symbolic hoard, it was entrusted to their Ostrogothic cousins until it could be safely returned. This treasure constituted not only the wealth of the Visigothic rulers, but also their memory as a social group in which the Hispano-Romans could not participate.¹² Their reputation as supreme goldsmiths may stem partly from this association.

A religious division between Catholics and Arians had separated the Hispano-Romans and the Goths in the fifth century and began to break down by the mid-sixth.¹³ Arianism was not so much a deeply held dogmatic position as simply a long-established part of Gothic

identity. Originally it was not controversial, merely one of the myriad versions of early Christianity, one that maintained that God the Son was not coexistent with God the Father, and that there had been a time before Christ. Indeed, the Arian faith was widely held or at least tolerated until the late seventh century, despite intermittently being declared a heresy.¹⁴ Some elite Goths were already converting to Catholicism in the mid-sixth century, which may have exacerbated the antagonism for a time. By 587, King Reccared had converted and put an end to that differentiating characteristic of Gothic identity. To these two categories, Visigoths and Hispano-Romans, I wish to add another small group, the immigrants and refugees that came to Spain in the sixth century. Their ethnic make-up is no clearer than that of the other groups, but culturally they arrived with Greek and North African learning, a Christianized version of antique learning (*paideia*), which enabled them to form an influential elite bound together by social ties or *amicitia*.¹⁵ A similar group, also possibly from Greece or Syria, was highly influential in the Roman church over a similar period.¹⁶ The main source for their arrival in Spain is the *Lives of the Fathers of Mérida* (*Vitae Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium* (VPE)), most likely a c. 600 text, supplemented by other works of the same era.¹⁷ It tells of a holy man called Paul, 'a Greek by nationality and a doctor by trade', who came 'from the lands of the East' to the city of Mérida, where he became bishop. His profession is of particular interest, in view of the evidence for skilled doctors in first-century Mérida. Bishop Paul was bequeathed a fortune by a grateful senator in return for performing

11 Woodruff, 1931, 80-104.

12 Hardt, 1998, 255-80.

13 Castillo Maldonado, 2013, 229-44.

14 Williams, 2011.

15 Graham, 2011, 158-61 and 165-67.

16 Richards, 1979; Noble, 1984, 184-88.

17 Fear, 1997, 45-105; Clark, 1987, 131-62.

a successful operation to remove a dead foetus from the womb of his wife. Paul, in turn, left a considerable legacy to his nephew, Fidelis, on condition that he succeeded him as bishop. Fidelis had also come from 'the East' as the 'hired hand' of merchants who came to trade in Mérida. These instances were part of a wider network that linked other senior members of the Church in the peninsula to Mediterranean trade in wine and luxury goods. Such commerce involving 'Syrian' and Jewish merchants flourished in certain cities of Spain, Portugal, and Gaul that could be reached by sea and river in the fifth and sixth centuries, but declined in the seventh.¹⁸

The *VPE* also recounts the arrival in Lusitania of an Abbot Nactus from the lands of Africa. Highly ascetic, he eventually gained the patronage of King Leovigild (r. 569-586) who gave him 'by written decree a special part of the royal estate' to provide him and his brothers with food and clothing, a boon that led immediately to his murder by the men who lived on the estate and were nominally subservient to him.¹⁹ In the Levante, on the southeastern coast of Hispania, another émigré African churchman, called Donatus, who had fled Berber attacks, built a monastery at Servitanum, aided by a noblewoman called Minicea, and gave it a monastic rule.²⁰ With Donatus came seventy monks, a large library, and a typically African anti-Arian stance.²¹ Later manuscripts help to confirm that texts travelled from Carthage to Toledo via Seville.²² Donatus's successor as abbot of Servitanum, Eutropius, was very likely one of his original companions, and he played a leading role at the council of 589, where the

Visigoths' conversion to the Roman church was formalized.²³ In this he stood alongside Bishop Leander of Seville (c. 534-600/1), who refers to his family's exile from their homeland during his own lifetime.²⁴ The family included two younger brothers, Isidore, bishop of Seville (c. 560-636) and Fulgentius, bishop of Astigi (f. 610); and a sister, Abbess Florentina.²⁵ Nothing is known of the family's origins but, as Roger Collins has proposed, they may well have come to Cartagena (Murcia) from the East and via Africa.²⁶ Despite his Greek name, Isidore demonstrates only limited knowledge of the Greek language, so was probably born in Spain.²⁷ Analysis of Isidore's writings estimates that he had access to a library of between 150 and 300 books divided into sixteen *armaria* or cupboards; it is uncertain whether the family brought this with them or found it in Spain.²⁸ Around 550, a churchman, who became known as Martin of Braga (d. 580), arrived on the northwest coast in the Suevic kingdom. St. Isidore and Gregory of Tours said that he came from Pannonia, travelled in the East and visited the holy places via Egypt, but recent research has suggested that his education was more likely based in Rome or Monte Cassino.²⁹ Martin had certainly acquired an interest in the ascetic monasticism of the Egyptian desert fathers and he translated a miscellaneous collection, *Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers*.³⁰ He became bishop of Dumio and, from 572, archbishop of Braga. He worked closely with the Suevic king, Miro (r. 570-583), and at the Second Council

18 Decker, 2009, 241-47 and 251-52.

19 Fear, 1997, 55-57.

20 Fear, 1997, 111-12.

21 Ildephonsus of Toledo, 3, 1972, 120.

22 Graham, 2011, 161.

23 Collins, 2006, 153.

24 Leander, 1979, 170-74; for the wider context, see Vallejo Girvés, 2004, 117-54.

25 Wood, 2012, 46-48.

26 Collins, 2006, 154; Wolf, 1990, 10-22.

27 Isidore of Seville, 2006, 7.

28 Lapidge, 2005, 21-22; Fontaine, 1959, 735-62.

29 Gregory of Tours, 1974, 301.

30 *The Book of Mystical Chapters*, 2002, 190.

of Braga, restructured the dioceses into Porto, Dumio, Viseu, Coimbra, Lamego, and Idanha, under Braga, and Tuy, Iria, Britonia, Orense, and Astorga, under Lugo.³¹ Martin is credited with the conversion of the immigrant Suevi from Arianism to Catholicism and the eradication of remnants of pagan beliefs from the local populace. History has recorded little of a small fourth group, the Byzantines. As part of wider conquests under Emperor Justinian along the coasts of North Africa and the Balearic Islands, they occupied lands in the southeast of the peninsula and established a Byzantine enclave (Spania). They traded not only across the Mediterranean but also around the coast of the peninsula as far as Vigo in the northwest, exchanging wine and luxury goods for tin and gold.³² Their potential cultural contribution is problematic, because, if it were significant, it might account for elements that were otherwise most likely introduced by the Umayyads from the end of the eighth century.³³ Travel, trade, and sometimes even inter-marriage ensured that none of the four groups identified here was entirely segregated within or outside the peninsula.³⁴

Thanks to two chroniclers, the documentary record for the peninsula comes back into focus from the second half of the sixth century. Two works written by contemporaries provide accounts of the Visigothic period, the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar (c. 590) and the *History of the Goths* by Isidore of Seville (624-636). Both turned to literary models that had been popular in late antiquity and presented their writing as continuations of earlier works.³⁵ John of

Biclar was probably of Gothic extraction, yet a Catholic and not an Arian. That he was born in Santarém (Scallabis) near the estuary of the river Tagus in Portugal, went to Constantinople to study for several years, and wrote his chronicle as a continuation of a North African text by Victor of Tunnuna, are all indicative of the wider world in which the elite of Hispania moved. He wrote the *Chronicle* while in prison in Barcelona, later founded a monastery nearby, and was appointed Catholic bishop of Gerona.³⁶ The *Chronicle* subtly interweaves the acts of the Visigothic kings with those of the Byzantine emperors, the Lombards, the Franks, the Saracens, the Persians, the Avars, the people of North Africa, and the popes. This approach enabled him to raise the status of the Visigoths without resorting to bombast. Alongside the main theme, John of Biclar highlighted certain individuals, under entries for particular years, and gave them a 'high esteem' accolade: Donatus of Servitanum (571); Dominus, bishop of Elne (572); Masona, bishop of Mérida (573); John, priest of Mérida (578); Novellus, bishop of Complutum (579); Abbot Eutropius of Servitanum (584), and Bishop Leander of Seville (585). These are all churchmen and probably all immigrants who belonged to a circle of *amicitia*.³⁷ Isidore of Seville, better known then and now for his encyclopaedia, the *Etymologies*, was a member of that immigrant circle, even if it was his older brother Leander who was praised by John of Biclar. Isidore's *History of the Goths* (c. 620) is, like John of Biclar's work, a continuation, but its narrative style contrasts with John of Biclar's spare text, and its focus is firmly on the Goths as heirs to the Roman Empire.³⁸ This is a Visigothic past carefully crafted by an influential outsider. Both John of Biclar

31 Violante Branco, 1999, 87-88; Ubric, 222-34.

32 Fernández, 2014.

33 Utrero, 2009c, 191-212.

34 For inter-marriage, see *The Visigothic Code*, 1910, book III.I.

35 Burgess, 2009, 153-77.

36 Wolf, 1990, 1-9, 51-66.

37 Collins, 1980, 215; Hillgarth, 1966, 483-508.

38 Collins, 2006, 164.

and Isidore grafted their compositions onto the works of late-antique predecessors, and a similar approach, I shall maintain, defined the contemporary use of Roman and late antique buildings, even if the physical alterations were outstripped by the literary extensions.

The Material Record: Metalwork

Chris Wickham has emphasised the disparity between the documentary and the archaeological record of Hispania at this period. Whilst the written record suggests that some aristocrats were managing to live a late 'late roman' lifestyle, recent archaeological investigation indicates pockets of considerable contraction where the skills of professional artisans had not been handed on.³⁹ Luke Lavan has confirmed this view in his recent survey of technological change.⁴⁰ How may such disparity affect an assessment of the art and architecture from the Visigothic period in the peninsula? To consider that question I shall begin with an examination of the celebrated corpus of 'Visigothic' metalwork, which falls into four main categories: gold coins, a range of cast bronze ewers and plates, jewellery from graves, and treasure hoards including votive crowns. Without going into the specialist study of Visigothic coins in depth, it is possible to establish from them an idea of the craftsmanship available in the peninsula and how it was used to express Visigothic royal identity. Before the last years of the reign of King Leovigild (569-586), the Visigoths had minted gold coins (*tremisses*) in imitation of those issued by the last Roman Emperors, and by the Byzantine emperors, Anastasius, Justin

I, and Justinian I (527-565), with busts of the emperors on the obverse and figures of Victory and crosses on the reverse.⁴¹ Leovigild, the king who is credited with asserting royal authority over most of the peninsula, was also the first Visigothic king to mint coins in his own name. This activity gained particular impetus during Leovigild's fight with his son, Hermenegild, who had rebelled and tried to seize the throne. Both minted new gold coins in an attempt to establish their divine right to rule, and in the process initiated distinctive Visigothic coinage. All later rulers and pretenders minted coins, which continued to present the current ruler and his victory over revolt.⁴² The elements of the design did not change from the old imperial imitations but the execution was markedly more schematic. Whilst admitting that the designs are 'striking', the numismatist Philip Grierson called the workmanship 'crude' and by the end of the Visigothic kingdom 'barbaric in the extreme'.⁴³ To judge from the stamped names, there were four main mints, Mérida, Toledo, Seville, and Córdoba. All produced coins in the name of the king, even though the dies varied and could have been more widely distributed. In contrast, very few coins were issued in the Byzantine enclave c. 555-c. 625.⁴⁴ It is not known how the large denomination gold coins were used, although it has been plausibly suggested that they were a way of distributing rewards to those who fought for the king, a form of social cohesion. The core of the Visigothic army was not very large and had to be supplemented by troops raised from Hispano-Roman

39 Wickham, 2005, 230.

40 Lavan, 2007, xxxi: 'One has to admit to a definite technological recession, at different times in different places, between the 5th and 7th c. A.D'.

41 For Visigothic coinage, see Grierson, 2007, 39-54; Miles, 1952; Metcalf, 1999, 201-17; Pliego, 2009. For a recent discovery of tremisses of King Leovigild in Mérida, see Pliego, 2005, 251-70.

42 McCormick, 1986, 316-23.

43 Grierson, 2007, 49.

44 Bartlett, 2011, 351-401.

estates.⁴⁵ The gold coins were probably a way of holding wealth and not for transactions, which may explain why so many have been found in hoards and so few as isolated examples.⁴⁶

The second group of metal objects from the Visigothic period, mostly small bronze ewers and plates turned on a lathe, are usually categorised as liturgical.⁴⁷ Almost none of them have a secure provenance and, despite the close analysis of Palol, their dating, function, and places of manufacture remain uncertain. One exception may be a group of liturgical objects found at El Bovalar (Lleida) in the ruins of its basilica, although the usefulness of these finds is limited because Palol did not fully publish the results of his 1950s excavations. He stated that this metalwork was found in the archaeological layer of destruction, dated by coins to the final years of Visigothic rule in the early eighth century. One liturgical object from the group is a cast copper-alloy incense burner, with a hinged lid pierced by circular openings ornamented with chi-rho monograms. It is generally agreed to be an import from either Italy or Coptic Egypt.⁴⁸ Although Palol accepted that some of the bronze ewers and plates were also imported, he believed that a substantial number of those found in the north of the peninsula were made around León. However, no evidence has been found for workshops with lathes in seventh-century León. As Palol's argument relied on comparisons with sculpted decoration in churches that may date from the ninth or tenth centuries, it is possible that some of these ewers and plates also post-date the Visigothic period.

The third category, jewellery from graves, comprises finds from large burial grounds (necropolises) on the meseta, with the largest concentration coming from Castiltierra and Duratón near Segovia and at El Carpio de Tajo outside Toledo. This is supplemented by occasional finds elsewhere in the peninsula: in bands across the north, for example, at Herrera de Pisuergra; in the south around Mérida and Córdoba; and by other items that lack any indication of provenance. Very few of the buckles or brooches were excavated under modern scientific methods, which has led to on-going disputes over interpretation. What can be said is that the range of jewellery buried with the dead in the sixth century is greater than that found in the seventh century, a move from complexity to simplicity that fits with archaeological studies of pottery in the period.⁴⁹ Beyond that, it is difficult to be confident in assigning the jewellery to specific ethnic or social groups, as nothing is known of the origin or status of the people who were buried. This material awaits a comprehensive interdisciplinary study, like that recently completed for Anglo-Saxon material.⁵⁰

The meaning of some of these ornaments may have changed over time and geographic location. For example, the crossbow fibulae found at El Carpio derive from brooches that originally fastened the cloaks of military officers, which in the fourth and fifth centuries became badges of imperial government.⁵¹ However, the fibulae of this type at El Carpio are in pairs and were used to fasten the sleeveless dresses of women.⁵² Their form and decoration also diverges from the finest late Roman examples. The semi-circular

45 Barral i Altet, 1978.

46 Metcalf, 1986, 307-24; Retamero, 1999, 281.

47 Palol, 1950, 320.

48 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 11, 52-53; for eastern Mediterranean examples, see *Byzantium and Islam*, 2012, cat. no. 122A-C, 180-81.

49 Reynolds, 1995.

50 Hines, 2013.

51 Deppert-Lippitz, 2000, 39-45.

52 AMS, cat. no. 15; Deppert-Lippitz, 2000, 39-45.

Figure 37 Cloisonné eagle fibulae (Museo de Cáceres)



headplates are decorated with geometric chip carving (*Kerbschnitt*), which continues across the rest of the surface, and they have five projections in the form of animal or bird heads with garnet or red glass eyes. Chip carving had long been used to decorate the buckles of imperial soldiers, and such pins may have been mass-produced and imported. Cloisonné decoration with garnets, glass, and other semi-precious stones was also popular, and pairs of fibulae in the form of facing cloisonné eagles (fig. 37) have been found to the west and north of Mérida and as far north as Herrera de Pisuerga.⁵³ Again these brooches reinvented imperial iconography for the adornment of women, and in a way that appealed especially to the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths. Cloisonné work was also the preferred decoration on belt buckles, sometimes combined with panels of chip carving. The cloisons were most often filled with semi-precious stones, especially almandine, but sometimes glass paste was

used, and in very rare instances lapis lazuli and even cuttle fish bone. Where the cloisons form leaf or flower shapes, they echo Byzantine fashions,⁵⁴ but the overall aesthetic seems 'Germanic' in its love of garnets, glass, and cloisonné work. There is no agreement as to whether these items come from local or centralised peninsular workshops, or if indeed they were imported.⁵⁵ Some scholars have discerned a process of cultural synthesis between Hispano-Roman and Visigothic populations in the late sixth and seventh centuries based on analysis of this jewellery.⁵⁶ However, in societies like Visigothic Spain, where military and political power was not always aligned with cultural power, the social signifiers are particularly difficult to read. Both Goths and Hispano-Romans could have used jewellery to establish difference or to emulate one another, but the social meaning of individual pieces or types of jewellery has been lost. Cultural fusion is a possibility, especially if the process suggested by the adage attributed to Theodoric in the early sixth century: 'A poor Roman plays the Goth, a rich Goth the Roman' continued.⁵⁷ Against that idea, the law codes written under mid-seventh-century Visigothic kings show that it was still meaningful to talk of Romans and Goths as separate groups and that inter-marriage, especially between Hispano-Roman women and Gothic men, remained an issue.

The late sixth and early seventh centuries saw a change in fashion, which meant that fibulae were no longer required and decoration became focused on fixed-plate belt buckles

54 For pairs of oval leaves in Roman military belt buckles, see Nees, 2002, 77, fig. 46.

55 Carr, 2002.

56 Kulikowski, 2005b, 247-54.

57 Anonymus Valesianus, 12.61, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Excerpta_Valesiana/2*.html, accessed 11 August, 2013.

53 AMS, 1993, cat no. 23.

found in both male and female graves. These buckles were either tongue- or lyre-shaped and were cast mainly in copper-alloy with low relief decoration that generally featured geometric or vegetal designs but could also employ quadrupeds or birds.⁵⁸ They have been found across the peninsula but in greatest numbers along the east and south coasts.⁵⁹ Now dulled by oxidisation, the buckles would once have shone like the Byzantine gold examples that they emulated. Spanish scholars have argued for peninsular workshops around Seville or Tarragona, but to date they lack the evidence of casts or tools that would corroborate those ideas.⁶⁰ Such evidence is indeed rare but a workshop was found in Rome at Crypta Balbi. The buckles discovered in Spain copy the form and detail of Italian examples to a remarkable degree,⁶¹ and the copper-alloy buckles may be imports from mainland Italy or Sicily.⁶² Visigothic law codes refer to merchants from across the sea (*transmarini negotiatores*) who bring gold, silver, garments, and *ornamenta*, which may have included buckles.⁶³ A piece of Byzantine jewellery, a gold bracteate or medallion, has been found in southwest Spain at Medellín, upriver from Mérida on the Guadiana. It too was probably an import, in this case from the East c. 600. A Greek inscription that begs the Virgin's protection for the wearer sits above and below the embossed depiction of the Adoration of the Magi before the Virgin and Child. In the late antique world this type of medallion functioned as an award or amulet

and was hung on a chain around the neck.⁶⁴ Typical designs were a portrait of the emperor or his triumphal *adventus*, so it was logical that Christian examples should substitute their own *adventus* of the Magi.⁶⁵

The most emblematic objects explicitly associated with the Visigothic kings are votive crowns. As objects from treasure hoards they lack any other provenance, so scholars have attempted to link those from Huertas de Guarrazar to the Visigothic capital Toledo, and the fragments from Torredonjimeno to Seville. The Guarrazar hoard was found in 1858, thirteen kilometres outside Toledo, off a minor road running southwest towards the Montes de Toledo. Fourteen crowns of cast bronze were first to come to the surface, followed by eight votive crowns made of gold and precious stones: garnets, sapphires, and emeralds as well as rock crystal, pearls, and glass.⁶⁶ These votive crowns were made to hang as offerings in a church over an altar, as shown in mosaics or later manuscript illuminations. This tradition is well documented for Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, although the only Visigothic reference is to King Recared giving a gold crown after his conversion to Catholicism (587) in the name of St. Felix of Girona.⁶⁷ Below one of the crowns, letters crafted in cloisonné hang from short chains to spell out the name of King Recceswinth (r. 653-672) and to commemorate his gift (fig. 38). Another crown from the hoard was stolen but it is recorded that it bore similar hanging letters to mark a gift of King Suinthila (r. 621-631). The treasure of Torredonjimeno, found outside Jaén, contained two incomplete sets of hanging letters that have been matched to fragments from

58 Ripoll, 1999, 403-30; AMS, 1993, 42, and cat. no.14-27; Pinar, 2005, 129-43; Medrano, 2004, 261-302, no.12-14.

59 Ripoll, 1999, 420.

60 Pinar, 2005, 138-39.

61 Ager, 2010, 75.

62 Campbell, 2000, 72-73; Doehaerd, 1971, 248; Ripoll, 1999, 403-30.

63 Decker, 2009, 245; García Vargas, 2011, 76-117.

64 Nees, 2002, 78-79.

65 Ager, 2010, 74-75.

66 AMS, 1993, 53.

67 Beckwith, 1979, 104; Dagron, 2003, 215-16.

Figure 38 Crown of King Recceswinth (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid)



two votive crowns.⁶⁸ Nothing similar survives from other Gothic kingdoms. Despite this and the broad range of techniques employed, the votive crowns are widely accepted as genuine Visigothic artefacts.⁶⁹ Only one pendant cross, originally a brooch, is ascribed to a Byzantine workshop, and is thus acknowledged to be a reused element.⁷⁰ The crown of Recceswinth is remarkable for its workmanship as well as for the amount of gold and number of jewels that it contains. Distinct techniques are visible on the crown, above all pierced work (*opus interrasile*) around cabochon sapphires and pearls on the body, which contrasts with the cruder cloisonné work used to form the hanging letters that spell out RECCESVINTHUS REX OFFERET above pendant gems and pearls.⁷¹ It may be argued that the juxtaposition of two such different styles and techniques is typical

of late 'late antique' taste and explains these otherwise incongruous components. Although that is a possibility, closer analysis of the crown may lead to another interpretation. The perforated openings that surround the middle row of alternating pearls and ovoid sapphires are shaped as narrow oval leaves on long stems.⁷² Smaller stems fill the spaces between the rounder sapphires and pearls on the upper and lower rows, sometimes ending in heart-shaped perforations. The central body of the crown is hinged and bordered above and below by decorated gold bands formed of circles divided by four oval segments. The crown hangs from four chains of pear-shaped links. There is nothing here to distinguish the crown from imperial items of jewellery or regalia from sixth- and seventh-century Constantinople. Surviving Byzantine regalia, such as the Berlin Collar, may offer the best comparisons from an overall perspective.⁷³

A recent comprehensive study by Alicia Perea has suggested a possible imperial origin for another piece found in the hoard: two arms of a gold processional cross which are decorated with almost identical *opus interrasile*, sapphires and pearls as well as emeralds, mother-of-pearl, and amethysts. The workmanship is akin to that of the crown of Recceswinth in the arrangement of the precious and semi-precious stones and pearls, and in the execution of the pierced leaves on long stems. Perea notes the use of circular punches in the areas between these stems, and a generally more organic design, which leads her to suggest that the processional cross could have been part of the Visigoths' treasure and that the crown was made in a Visigothic workshop as a response to the processional

⁶⁸ Torredonjimeno, 2003, 25-27, 147-50.

⁶⁹ García-Vuelta, 2014, 245-71.

⁷⁰ AMS, 1993, cat. no. 12d, 56; Ripoll, 1999, 415; Perea, 2001b, 174-75.

⁷¹ Buckton, 1983-1984, 15-19; Niemeyer, 1998, 87-96.

⁷² Tóth, 2010, 1-12; Perea, 2001b, 162-166.

⁷³ *Byzantium*, 2008, cat. no. 121; Stolz, 2010, 33-39.

cross.⁷⁴ Given the lack of other comparative material in Spain, an alternative view may be postulated: that both the crown and the processional cross were made in Constantinople and that the cloisonné letters were added at a later date to customise the crown. Tests have been carried out to identify the origin of the gold, but they have not been conclusive and, given the amount of gold extracted from Spain in the Roman period, could not in any case confirm Visigothic manufacture.⁷⁵ A Byzantine origin remains the most plausible explanation for this piece, especially if a historical context can be suggested. Although trade and looting remain possible routes for its acquisition, a votive crown is more likely to have been a diplomatic gift and, given the quality of the workmanship, one from Constantinople and not from the Byzantine enclave of Spania. Two known historical events provided possible opportunities for such a gift. Around 617 a legate from King Sisebut (r. 611/12-620) visited Constantinople so that the emperor, Heraclius, could formally accept Sisebut's conquest of most of Spania.⁷⁶ The agreement was doubtless recognised by an exchange of gifts, perhaps particularly lavish on the part of the emperor. Another peace treaty concluded by the same emperor with the Bulgar chief, Kuvrat, c. 635, may have occasioned similar gifts. Gold belt fittings from a patrician belt have been found at Pereshchepina in what is believed to be Kuvrat's tomb and are now in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.⁷⁷ Accompanied by rings that bestowed patrician status on Kuvrat, the belt fittings had been made in Constantinople. The belt buckle is lyre-shaped but its decoration is dominated by cloisonné work with coloured

glass, apparently in an effort to reflect the taste of its recipient, a kind of 'barbarian chic'.⁷⁸ If such nuanced customisation was possible, new interpretations open up for some of the 'Visigothic' metalwork.⁷⁹ Birgit Arrhenius's work on Merovingian jewellery and its possible dependence on production techniques and designs from Constantinople may also be relevant here.⁸⁰

Another opportunity for diplomatic gifts would have been the time spent in Constantinople by Leander, bishop of Seville, between 579 and 582, when he solicited aid for King Leovigild's rebellious son, Hermenegild. During this time Leander met the future Pope Gregory the Great, who was to portray Hermenegild as a martyr for the cause of Catholicism in Hispania.⁸¹ The extremely liberal Byzantine Emperor Tiberius II Constantine could have entrusted royal gifts to Leander, including the crown, in the hope that they would reach the potential Catholic ruler. In all these cases, King Recceswinth would have been reusing an earlier object and claiming it as his own by the attachment of the pendant cloisonné letters. Appended with short chain links, the letters are interwoven into the fabric of the crown, but stylistically they remain at odds. If Recceswinth's crown is recycled, it would not lessen the importance of the object, but it would change our perception of it. It would become a witness to ways in which the Visigoths re-invented their treasury and grafted new identities onto valued objects from the past. The diversity of the other votive crowns in the Guarrazar treasure, in design, technique, and

74 Perea, 2001b, 165-66.

75 Guerra, 2007, 53-74; Díaz y Díaz, 1970, 271.

76 Wood, 2010, 292-319.

77 Althaus, 2006, 18-19, 55 and 168.

78 Althaus, 2006, cat. no. 110 and 111.

79 Nees, 2002, 75-76.

80 Arrhenius, 1985, 84-86 and 100-106.

81 Gregory the Great, 1979, III. 31, 384-93; Collins, 2006, 57-58; Goffart, 1957, 73-118; Salvador, 2013, 245-61.

materials, might also be explained if they were gifts from other diplomatic encounters.

In 1926 a second hoard was found in the outskirts of Torredonjimeno (Jaén).⁸² The contents are more fragmentary and damaged, and generally the workmanship and materials are not as fine as those of the Guarrazar hoard. There is no pierced work and more glass paste than precious stones. One repoussé gold Latin cross has rough vine scroll decoration across its arms, framed by a double moulded border. This can be compared with one of the simpler votive crowns in the Guarrazar hoard that also bears vegetal repoussé designs, but the work on the crown is much more regular and precise. Some fragments from Torredonjimeno, including the cloisonné letters T, E, R, V, F, and I, have been reconstructed as two votive crowns. It has been suggested that these letters originally spelt out '[IVS]TE RVFI[NE]', as found incised on two other small gold crosses in the hoard.⁸³ This would fit with the proposal that the hoard originally belonged in Seville. Alternatively, as a range of incised inscriptions appear in the Torredonjimeno hoard, the letters could equally have spelt [O]F[F]ERT ... IV ... and recorded the gift of a now anonymous donor. Although some elements of the Torredonjimeno hoard could have come from abroad or from the Byzantine enclave, it may give a fair impression of metalworking in Visigothic Spain.

From this survey of the corpus of the metalwork, it is apparent that gold and precious stones played an important role at the Visigothic court, as signifiers of its power, as preservers of its memory and identity, and as a means of political exchange amongst the elites. Visigothic kings not only held large amounts of treasure, but, like emperors, they had to be seen to give it. The donation of finely wrought votive crowns to saints

and the Church was a gesture of late antique imperial-level largesse (*largitio*). Visigothic taste also seems to have been a development of late 'late antique' taste, which demonstrated a love of the cumulative, of showpieces, and of intricate miniaturised workmanship.⁸⁴ 'Roman' objects, whether from Italy or the East, were highly prized, and there may have been little demand for local work, especially if it was of lower quality. Ownership was asserted by incising or stamping names onto gold and by interlocking identities with pre-existing objects that embodied political power and cultural status.⁸⁵

The Material Record: Architecture and Sculpture

The narrative of architecture in Visigothic Hispania proposed here is one of large-scale reuse. Despite much depredation and destructive reoccupation in both the town and country, many late antique structures may have stood into the sixth and even seventh centuries.⁸⁶ However, economic and political realities meant that different types of building were needed. Large monumental structures had gradually fallen into disuse along with their institutions. Lesser, and often rural, buildings, including those for travellers along the old Roman roads, changed in response to new occupiers. Reuse took many different forms, and earlier buildings were fragmented and reconstituted in many guises. It could be reuse of elements in another structure or reoccupation and sub-division of a structure.⁸⁷ Although it is now agreed that there

⁸² Perea, 2009.

⁸³ Castillo, 2003, 55-67, cat. no. 1, 16, and 63.

⁸⁴ Elsner, 2006, 309.

⁸⁵ Brenk, 1987, 103-109.

⁸⁶ For reuse in Italy under the Ostrogoths, see Ward-Perkins, 1984, 203-29.

⁸⁷ Arce, 2011a, 204-205; Brogiolo, 2008, 193-213; Alba, 2007, 173-78.

was little reuse of pagan Roman temples in the late antique period, such misgivings faded during the sixth and especially the seventh centuries, after a hiatus of over a hundred years, and temples were reoccupied either as houses or as religious buildings.⁸⁸ Where there is good evidence for new work, it comes from the sixth century and often involves refurbishment more than rebuilding, liturgical revetment, or chancel screens.⁸⁹ In summary, I am proposing that Visigothic-period building was mostly grafted onto earlier structures, in much the same way that I believe the name of Recceswinth to have been attached to the votive crown. This statement does not hold true for all sites throughout the whole period, but was, I believe, increasingly the case as the sixth century gave way to the seventh.

In the sixth century the peninsula was already highly fragmented. The sites that provide most material are the Roman provincial capital of Mérida on the *Via de la Plata* in the southwest and the previous provincial capital of Tarragona on the *Via Augusta* in the northeast. Both cities had long-established Hispano-Roman populations and continued to attract trade and immigration. That vitality spread into the surrounding areas along the road and river networks. A fairly coherent picture of reuse emerges along the northern stretch of the old *Via Augusta*. The most encapsulating visual example comes from the basilical church erected within the amphitheatre at Tarragona, on the supposed site of the martyrdom of SS. Fructuosus, Eulogius, and Augurius.⁹⁰ Along with St. Eulalia of Mérida, these saints were Spain's best-attested martyrs from the period of persecutions. The church is difficult to

appreciate now, as the building is dominated not only by the amphitheatre, but also by a larger twelfth-century church built over what may be a sixth-century structure. The excavated foundations of the church display a three-aisled nave built with stone blocks taken from the amphitheatre, and an apse that includes fragments of a Roman inscription (fig. 22).⁹¹ If this apse is part of an original sixth-century church, which remains unproven, it would be an early example of a horseshoe-shaped apse in plan, a distinctive feature that some scholars believe to be typical of sixth- and seventh-century Visigothic churches. The nave arcade may have stood on a row of reused grey granite columns that have been found nearby. The fragments of sculpture recovered from the site, or attributed to it, come from low chancel screens, altars, or window grilles.⁹² The screens were made from slabs of marble, which may once have covered Roman buildings in the city, but were given chip-carved geometric and foliate decoration to fit them for their new purpose.⁹³ Such chip-carved decoration recalls, and perhaps even copies, similar designs applied to metalwork, especially military belt buckles.⁹⁴ These fragments are usually dated to the sixth century, but it remains possible that some were carved in later periods when Muslims ruled the city. The buildings in the most prominent upper part of the city, where the main administrative complex and temple of Augustus had stood in the Roman period, may have been reused as a cathedral and bishop's residence in the Visigothic period.⁹⁵

Tarragona was gradually eclipsed during the sixth century by the Visigothic rulers'

88 Arce, 2011a, 204-205; Alba, 2007, 163-92.

89 Dodds, 1990, 16.

90 Váldez del Álamo, 2013, 146-48; Dodds, 1990, 19, 51, 127 and fig.9; Godoy, 1995, 191-202.

91 TED'A, 1990, 205-42; Guidi-Sánchez, 2010, 757-94.

92 Guardia, 2006, 191-219.

93 Salom, 2010, 685-756.

94 Nees, 2002, 77-78 and fig. 46.

95 Hauschild, 1994, 151-56; Macias, 2003, 167-75.

preference for its neighbour, Barcelona, where excavation has focused on the episcopal complex. Originally occupying a fine domestic *domus* in the fifth century, the bishop's complex continued to develop near the same site until major rebuilding in the eleventh century.⁹⁶ Only fragments survive to recreate the interior furnishings of the buildings. Two pieces of Parian marble, a helicoidal column and a fine carved screen, were imports; whether they arrived in the late sixth century or were imported at an earlier date and reused at that time remains a matter for debate.⁹⁷ Other precisely carved stone fragments from the episcopal complex are important for their chip-carved patterns, because they have analogues at San Juan de Baños, far to the west near Palencia.⁹⁸ The two relevant Barcelona fragments have similar, but not identical, repeating motifs formed by four-petal or six-petal flowers separated by small bosses, familiar from Roman mosaics; one has cable moulding and in the corner a small heart-shaped flower.⁹⁹ The excavators reported substantial alterations to the complex around the end of the sixth century, including the replacement of the font in the baptistery with a stepped octagonal pool. Constructed of reused material this provided steps for the catechumen to enter the water. The baptismal inscription painted on the nearby wall, 'he orders you to renounce the enemy of the Lord', may relate to this same set of alterations.¹⁰⁰

Up the Ebro valley on the banks of the river Segre, and only fifteen kilometres from its confluence with the river Cinca, the settlement of

El Bovalar (Seròs) occupied a hilltop site that may have been close to a Roman villa (fig. 39).¹⁰¹ This is the site where the copper-alloy censer was discovered along with coins from the end of the Visigothic period. The excavated remains are particularly useful because the site was destroyed in the early eighth century and not reoccupied.¹⁰² The major building is a three-aisled basilica, perhaps fifth-century, with a raised sanctuary at the east end and a baptistery at the west end, recalling arrangements found at Fraga and Francolí. Constructed from reused Roman masonry, it even re-employed Roman roof tiles (*tegulae*). Roman columns with Corinthian capitals may have supported the roof, although they are now mainly lost or severely damaged.¹⁰³ It remains unclear whether a building stood on the site in the Roman period, but it would explain the extent of the reuse. Its square tripartite east end was apparently divided from the nave by low chancel barriers of limestone, carved in low relief, but the only one excavated disappeared as soon as it was discovered.¹⁰⁴ Excavations suggested that the baptismal font was originally a simple structure with stairs to the north and south, but later the steps on the south side were removed and a parapet constructed with supporting columns. The move to a single set of steps is difficult to understand, unless it marked the abandonment of Arianism and a move to single immersion. Arian Goths should not have been rebaptised when they converted to Catholicism, as it was not permitted in the Catholic Church.¹⁰⁵ Baptismal fonts seem to have increased in importance around 600, and it may be significant that King Sisebut

96 Beltrán de Heredia, 2002, cat. no. 310 and 312; Guardia, 1999a, 230-37; Beltrán de Heredia, 1999, 100-106; García Vargas, 2011, 96 and 104; Utrero, 2009c, 143.

97 Soldini, 2000, 423-48.

98 Beltrán de Heredia, 2002, 106, fig. 24.

99 Guardia, 2006, 200-201; Guardia, 1999a, 230-37.

100 Aasgaard, 2010, 1264-66.

101 Palol, 1989.

102 Wickham, 2005, 488-89; Kulikowski, 2004, 300-301.

103 Utrero, 2006b, fig. 4, 3434-35.

104 Guardia, 2006, 202-203.

105 Wood, 2006, 14-15.

forced Jews to be baptised when, in the opinion of Isidore, they should have been persuaded to convert.¹⁰⁶ The El Bovalar font has been reconstructed in the Museu de Lleida Diocesà I Comarcal together with the ciborium that is thought to have covered it. The ciborium may reuse capitals from the villa, although they do not form a natural set and remain problematic. By the time the village was destroyed, the community could have been self-sufficient, as it had vines, goats, cattle, and sheep. Each house had the implements for carding wool from the sheep.¹⁰⁷ The possibilities for farming and its relative safety may be sufficient to explain the existence of a community on this site. But it is also possible that the river, or more accurately, the confluence, played a role. Settlements were

often located close to confluences, for ease of communication, for fishing, and sometimes for panning metals. The Segre was noted for carrying gold dust deposits, and that may be an even better explanation for the existence of this site. It would also help to explain the unusual number of coins found in three houses within the walls, as the denominations are high if only farm produce was being traded.¹⁰⁸

Further up the Ebro, the once great city of Zaragoza had survived a siege by the Frankish king Childebert I in 541. According to Gregory of Tours, the Franks were baffled by the defensive antics of the inhabitants who 'dressed themselves in hair-shirts, abstained from eating and drinking, and marched round the city walls singing psalms and carrying the

Figure 39 El Bovalar (Seròs), basilica



¹⁰⁶ Wood, 2006, 5 and 15; Wolf, 1990, 106.

¹⁰⁷ Kulikowski, 2004, 300-302.

¹⁰⁸ Viladevall, 1991, 187-215.

tunic of Saint Vincent the martyr'.¹⁰⁹ If accurate, this says much for the perceived power of relics in the mid-sixth century. The relics of St. Vincent were also claimed by Valencia, the site of his martyrdom on a gridiron before execution.¹¹⁰ Recent excavations have taken place in Valencia, where the Roman centre of the city has been exposed and its later Christianization. An ecclesiastical complex, including a cruciform building with a square apse, was constructed over a commercial area close to the market and the old Flavian forum. The dates of the structures are disputed, and attempts to interpret elements of the site through the late fourth-century account of the martyrdom (*passio*) of St. Vincent have obscured some of the findings.¹¹¹ Less is known of Zaragoza's sixth-century structures, partly because it was extensively re-built under Muslim rule, but also because modern excavation has focussed on rescuing its classical past. Sixth-century Zaragoza would have had an episcopal centre, perhaps housed in late antique buildings, and one that was capable of producing scholars like Braulio who went to study with Isidore in the south, but returned in 619 and became bishop in 631.¹¹² He had an extensive collection of books to assist his study, which he continued to expand. Amongst his own works was a life (*Vita*) of the ascetic hermit St. Aemilian (d. 574) set in the wild Iberian landscape that was often the focus of holy men in the Visigothic period. Relying on an earlier life of St. Martin of Tours, Braulio presents Aemilian as an indigenous saint to equal or even outdo St. Martin.¹¹³ According to this version, Aemilian had begun as a shepherd

of sheep inspired by the music of his cithara to pursue 'the contemplation of heavenly things'. Taking advice from a hermit called Felix, Aemilian 'came to the more remote secret places of Mount Dircetius, staying as near to the summit as the nature of the weather and the woods would allow, he became a guest of the hills'.¹¹⁴ He spent forty years in the wilderness, wrestled with the devil, and performed several miracles both during his lifetime and posthumously from the tomb in his oratory. An on-going debate questions the exact location of St. Aemilian's birth, his oratory, his travels, and his burial.¹¹⁵ Braulio's *Vita* places his activity between the Sierra de Cantabria and the Sierra de la Demanda in what is now La Rioja, and says that he was based in the diocese of Tarazona, further east towards Zaragoza.¹¹⁶ Aemilian's cult spread beyond these areas, as the *Vita* also records interest from several late 'late antique' aristocrats with senatorial titles, especially from the area around Amaya in Cantabria. The site that held the memory of St. Aemilian in the long term was the eponymous San Millán de la Cogolla, where the upper monastery, Suso, claims to enclose the original cave where he lived and prayed. Despite the traditions around Suso, there is no archaeological evidence to support this site over the many other habitable caves across the region.

The fragmentary nature of the Visigothic kingdom is demonstrated most forcefully by the atypical city of Mérida, the erstwhile provincial capital.¹¹⁷ It is exceptional for its relative wealth, for its documentary and

109 Gregory of Tours, 1974, III.29, 186-87.

110 Castillo, 2005, 163.

111 Soriano, 1995, 133-40; Utrero, 2009b, 142-43; Castillo, 2005, 163.

112 Fear, 1997, xxvi-xxix.

113 Fear, 1997, xxix; Castillo, 2005, 171.

114 Fear, 1997, 23.

115 Kulikowski, 2004, 304-306; Gutiérrez Cuenca 2010, 97-113.

116 Wickham, 2005, 223.

117 For fiscal fragmentation, see Martín Viso, 2013, 72-85.

epigraphic record.¹¹⁸ Like Tarragona and Zaragoza it had a powerful martyr, St. Eulalia, who was its *patrocinium* or protector. The Catholic bishops of the city championed her cult and claimed her approval for their actions. *The Lives of the Fathers of Merida (VPE)*, constitutes the documentary record. As Santiago Castellanos has shown, this text aimed to present an idealized image of a harmonious community led by a pastoral bishop, when in fact the city was divided economically and religiously.¹¹⁹ Studies of its range of houses, in particular by Miguel Alba, characterise this vibrant and crowded society. Most residences occupied pre-existing structures, public buildings or houses, subdividing them so that several families could live in multi-purpose rooms. Aqueducts and baths no longer functioned. There were few new structures, except for the walls that protected the city. Within them, a dense population put up houses inside the Roman theatre, against the Temple of Augustus, used colonnades for supports, and recycled masonry. Many people lived with their animals or alongside light industry. A few members of the elite maintained separate houses, within the Temple in the 'house of the Alcazaba', and two new structures in the area now known as the Morería.¹²⁰ This disarray needs to be borne in mind, when the *VPE* is read for its rich incidental information on immigrant churchmen and architectural projects. These are undertaken by two bishops of Mérida, Fidelis, who came from 'the East', and Masona, who is said to be a Goth despite bearing a Berber name.¹²¹ According to the *VPE*, in the second half of the sixth century Fidelis spent much of his legacy from Bishop Paul on

the restoration of the episcopal palace, which had miraculously collapsed:

He built an edifice which was enormous in both its length and breadth with a lofty roof. He gave the luxurious halls decorated pillars for their supports and clothed the entire floor and walls in gleaming marbles, placing a marvellous ceiling above them. Then he restored and improved the basilica of the most holy virgin Eulalia in a wondrous fashion, building towers with lofty gables on the high roof of that most holy church.¹²²

The bishop's palace has not been discovered, unless it can be identified with one of the complete houses; in any case its fine marble cladding would have been stripped and recycled in later centuries. On the other hand, excavations have shown that side apses were indeed added to the fifth-century basilica of Santa Eulalia.¹²³ They were semi-circular and had piers that could have supported towers. It is unclear whether this reinforcement was for defensive or funerary purposes. This kind of correlation between a hagiographic text and the archaeological record has to be treated with extreme caution, but the *VPE* has been shown to be potentially reliable in other respects.¹²⁴

The church of Santa Eulalia lies by the river Guadiana, in the cemetery area outside the walls of Mérida and close to the crossroads of two main Roman roads, one linking Scallabis to Pax Iulia, the other Metellinum to Turgalium. This junction may explain why, according to the *VPE*, Fidelis's successor, Bishop Masona, built a *xenodochium* nearby, a hospital in both

118 Kulikowski, 2005a, 69.

119 Castellanos, 2003, 287-419.

120 Alba, 2007, 173-78.

121 Fear, 1997, 50, para.1.25.

122 Fear, 1997, 66, para. 6.7-8.

123 Caballero, 1991a, 525-46; Bowes, 2005b, 195-98, fig. 3a and 3b. For pilgrimage in the seventh century, see the journey of St. Fructuosus in Fear, 1997, 133.

124 Collins, 1980, 189-219.

senses, for the sick as well as for travellers and pilgrims.¹²⁵ In the early 1990s excavations uncovered a complex only some 200 metres from Santa Eulalia. These exposed a small apsed hall, flanked by two large aisled chambers with long porticos of seventeen metres on each side of a central patio, which has been compared to similar arrangements found in Gaul, Italy, and Africa, and thus identified as Masona's *xenodochium*.¹²⁶ In an attempt to emphasise the historical healing role of the bishop, the *VPE* says that Masona arranged for doctors to seek out the sick, to bring them to the hospital, and to feed them on the produce of the farms with which the hospital was endowed. It represents the hospital as a centre of physical healing and spiritual care: all the sick were welcome, slaves and free, Christians and Jews; patients received light and pleasant food, whilst citizens and countrymen who came in need could be dispensed wine, oil, or honey, all amounting to a powerful image of the bishop's desire to unite a fragmented society. The *VPE* also records that Masona founded and endowed many monasteries and basilicas at the beginning of his incumbency, and that the cathedral church, then dedicated to Holy Jerusalem, had a small baptistery abutting it and indeed under the same roof.¹²⁷ The relationship between the community and the bishop is at the centre of the *VPE* in both practical and spiritual matters. The monastery of Santa Eulalia acts as a bank for public credit, and the bishop mediates with the saint on behalf of the community and leads prayers to protect the harvest.¹²⁸ The *VPE* gives a

vivid image of the exceptional power and status of the bishop when it describes how:

On the most holy day of Easter he set out for the church, surrounded by many boys wearing silk cloaks as if they were in attendance on a king, and wearing this apparel, something that in those days no one had been able or presumed to do, they went before him and paid him due homage. (*VPE* 5.3.12)

This society was in close touch with the East through immigration and trade. Silk had been introduced to Constantinople only in the mid-sixth century from China, and was then exported around the Byzantine Empire. Textiles were presumably brought to Mérida by eastern, probably Syrian, merchants, like those that called upon the bishop and brought him gifts in the *VPE*.¹²⁹ Although other cities may have aspired to this kind of display, there is no evidence that they could execute it so richly. The relative affluence of Mérida would support Luke Lavan's contention that 'the key to preserving technical skill was the availability of large-scale funding', as Mérida also provides the finest examples of architecture and decorative sculpture from this period.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, none of the sculpture remains in its architectural context and survives only as isolated pieces or fragments without a provenance. Some are in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, but the majority remain in Mérida. Most of these came from antiquarian collections in the Palacio del duque de la Roca or from the Convent of Jesus, and have been displayed since 1838 in the deconsecrated convent church of Santa Clara, founded in 1602 by Lope Sánchez Triana, a doctor from Mérida. Square pilasters are also found at the entrance

125 Fear, 1997, 5.3; Voltaggio, 2011, 197-98; Horden, 2005, 361-89.

126 For building typologies and xenodochia, see Stasolla, 1998, 5-45.

127 Fear, 1997, 69.

128 Fear, 1997, 76; Castillo, 2005, 183-84.

129 Fear, 1997, iv 3.2-3.

130 Lavan, 2007, xxix-xxx.

to the cistern (*aljibe*) in the Arab Alcazaba, an arrangement that probably relates to interventions in the eighteenth century.

Several attempts have been made to catalogue these pieces and fragments and to assign them to buildings.¹³¹ They include whole sections of low chancel barriers, a number of square piers usually called pilasters, a deep conch shell niche, a row of connected panels that has been catalogued as a revetment over a presbytery door, a double window, and other more fragmentary pieces. With the possible exception of some of the pilasters, it has not been possible to link these pieces to specific buildings, whether the basilica of Santa Eulalia, the cathedral of uncertain location, the bishop's palace, or other ecclesiastical sites around the city. It is not even possible to be sure that they were produced during the bishoprics of Fidelis and Masona, or necessarily before the eighth century. Crucially, analysis of the marble has shown that it came from the local quarry of Borba to the west of Mérida. This means that the pieces were carved locally, probably from Roman slabs, and not imported.¹³² Both the square piers and the conch niche have been compared to sculptural elements from the church of St. Polyeuktos (524-527) in Constantinople. The *pilastri acritani* from St. Polyeuktos, now outside San Marco in Venice, and the pilasters from Mérida share an unusual form, a square pillar crowned by a capital (fig. 40). They were also executed in the same rhythm: two opposite sides receive vegetal decoration, whilst on the other two sides geometric or architectural decoration is constrained within a frame. This seems to have been the standard method of applying decoration to this form, and it can be found elsewhere, from classical examples to the Coptic monastery of

Apa Apollo at Bawit.¹³³ In Constantinople the capitals are distinct architectural units with elaborate vegetal carving, but at Mérida, as at Bawit, they are part of the same block as the pilaster and carved with capital friezes. The work at Mérida also differs from the precise naturalistic style found on the Byzantine pilasters where vine scroll flows from urns: it is more schematic and sometimes employs an illusionistic conceit where a column and capital are carved within a frame on two or even four sides of the pilaster. A number of apparently related pilasters were also found in the province and city of Badajoz, in the Islamic Alcazaba. Badajoz was founded in 875 by Ibn Marwān, after he was expelled from Mérida by the emir, and he turned Badajoz into a walled fortress with mosques and baths.¹³⁴ Given that some of the pilasters in Mérida were also found in the Islamic Alcazaba, it is feasible that at least some of them date from that period. Sculptural elements from Mérida, Badajoz, Córdoba, and even Toledo, which carry no Christian markers, could belong to the ninth or tenth centuries, especially if the patterns found on marble plaques in the mihrab of the Great Mosque at Qayrawan are borne in mind. Despite this, all the pilasters are usually assumed to date from the late sixth or seventh centuries.¹³⁵ The function of the pilasters is uncertain. The examples from Mérida have been sorted into two main sets on the basis of height, but both putative sets are too small to support anything but a low roof, so it has been proposed that some of them may have formed a portico around the courtyard of Bishop Masona's *xenodochium*. This idea was strengthened when one was

¹³¹ Nogales, 1988, 521-32; Cruz, 1982, 7-14.

¹³² Cruz, 1982, 10-11.

¹³³ Beckwith, 1963, 53, no. 86 and 87; McKenzie, 2007, 295-305.

¹³⁴ Kennedy, 1996, 70-71.

¹³⁵ Valdés Fernández, 1985.

Figure 40 Pilaster (Museo del arte y la cultura Visigoda, Mérida)



discovered on what is believed to be the site of the *xenodochium*.¹³⁶

The scalloped marble niche at Mérida shares a form with one found *in situ* at St. Polyeuktos in 1960, but, like the pilasters, its decoration is distinct (fig. 41).¹³⁷ It has been compared more recently, and perhaps more convincingly, to a large silver book cover from the Sion treasure.¹³⁸ Now at Dumbarton Oaks and originally from the East, this book cover displays a cross under a semi-circular gable and scalloped niche supported on spiral columns.¹³⁹ As we know that books were brought into Spain from North

Africa, it is indeed possible that the carved niche derived its decorative scheme from a book cover, even though there are differences in the form of the cross. On the carving, a chi-rho is merged with a diagonal cross, and the bowl of the letter 'rho' is unusually small and finished with a tag.¹⁴⁰ The arms of the chrismon are incised as if set with jewels, and an alpha and omega hang from them. In contrast, the cross on the book cover is a Latin cross with splayed arms. Most tellingly perhaps, both niches flank the cross with ambiguous, almost animate, trees or palm branches. Neither the original location nor the function of the scalloped niche at Mérida is certain, but it is usually thought to be part of the inner decoration of an apse, where it may have marked the bishop's throne. Even though the work in Mérida is not as fine as that found in the Byzantine Empire, there is no doubt that some of the liturgical furnishings share a decorative vocabulary and sculptural techniques with items produced in the Empire, from Ravenna to Constantinople and North Africa. Marble revetments and screens have triangular gabling with cable moulding, sometimes alternating with semi-circular arches. Miniature columns enclose panels of repeating decoration, grids filled with affronted birds, vine scroll with alternating fruit and leaves, and geometric patterns.¹⁴¹ Figurative work is limited to birds, a Lamb of God, and a one-horned quadruped. All this raises questions about the identity and formation of the sculptors at Mérida. The lack of sculpture of this quality across the rest of the peninsula suggests that the sculptors were few in number and perhaps only intermittently in residence.

¹³⁶ Mateos, 1995, 309-16.

¹³⁷ Hoppe, 1987, 9-46.

¹³⁸ Barroso, 1999a, 17.

¹³⁹ Lowden, 2007, 25-31, figs. 5, 6, 7; Boyd 1992.

¹⁴⁰ Although nothing outside Spain matches this piece, comparisons may be made with Syrian or Coptic lettering; for example, the Syrian Chalice in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, see *Byzantium*, 2008, cat. no. 187.

¹⁴¹ Barroso, 1999b, 425-36; Deliyannis, 2010, 144, 214.

Figure 41 Mérida, sculpted niche (Museo del arte y la cultura Visigoda, Mérida)



It is not impossible that a local workshop tradition survived from the fifth century, but it is more likely that the sculptors came from the east or from North Africa with the merchants who came to trade. Some of them may have stayed or trained local apprentices. Little evidence survives for construction in seventh-century Mérida. Nonetheless an inscription, found near the entrance to the present parish church of Santa Eulalia, attests to both female patronage and building, albeit on a modest scale, in seventh-century Mérida. In poetic language that plays with ideas of opening and enclosure, it says that an abbess ('virgin mother of virgins'), called Eugenia, has constructed 'an entrance for a doorway', perhaps a porch.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Vives, 1942, no. 358, 124; Rico, 2009, 31.

Mérida might appear less aberrant if we had more physical evidence from Seville and Córdoba in the sixth century. Biclár says that Leovigild restored the walls of the old Roman city of Itálica, when he came to attack Seville, but he tells us nothing of the city itself. The remains of what may be a baptismal font were excavated in the Alcázar at Seville in the late 1970s. The excavators found an original rectangular structure of the fourth or fifth centuries that might have been altered in the Visigothic period to an octagon.¹⁴³ This would match the findings from Barcelona and, together with other more extensive excavations at El Tolmo de Minateda (Hellín, Albacete), would help to confirm a new emphasis on the baptismal ritual in the early seventh century.¹⁴⁴ The remains of Visigothic-period Córdoba often continue to be interpreted in relation to the Arabic source, Ibn 'Idhāri (c. 1300), whose text claims to be based on earlier sources. 'Idhāri tells how the Muslims first constructed a mosque within a church dedicated to San Vicente, allowing the Christians to continue using the other half. When the Muslim population increased, they bought the rest of the building so it could be demolished and a new mosque constructed.¹⁴⁵ Pedro Marfil has set out the archaeological arguments for earlier ecclesiastical occupation of the site of the Great Mosque in the sixth century, but these involve a considerable amount of interpretation that he clearly presents as his opinion.¹⁴⁶ The mosaics discovered at basement level may belong to a late Roman complex. The bishops of Córdoba at that period would

¹⁴³ Bowes, 2005b, 199–200, note 26; Blanco Freijeiro, 1992, 70–71; Bendala, 1980, 335–79.

¹⁴⁴ Abad Casal, 2000, 193–221.

¹⁴⁵ Creswell, 1932–1940, 139; Dodds, 1992, 11–12.

¹⁴⁶ Marfil, 2006, 35–57; some of Marfil's arguments relate to his view of Cercadilla in opposition to Hidalgo (see Chapter 2).

have had a residence, a cathedral, and other churches, but it remains unclear whether these were on the site of the Mosque, used a converted *domus* as at Barcelona, or reoccupied part or all of the complex at Cercadilla or other administrative buildings.¹⁴⁷ Fragments of sculpture survive again without any reliable provenance and here without any documentary context.¹⁴⁸ Displayed in the new Museo Arqueológico de Córdoba or in the Cathedral Mosque, pieces of liturgical furniture include altar supports and niche plaques but, unlike the material from Mérida, they do not form a coherent group. The persistence of the geometric motifs used in these pieces, from the sixth to the tenth century, also casts doubt on a Visigothic chronology for all these fragments. A plaque with a scalloped niche over a chrismon merged with a diagonal cross is similar to the examples from Mérida, but the flatter design and some of the detailing make its date uncertain. A number of stone and terracotta plaques found in Córdoba and Seville can be more confidently placed in the Visigothic period, as they belong to an established genre dating from the fourth to the seventh centuries.¹⁴⁹ Decorated mainly with hexagram designs or the chrismon, they may originally have been painted.¹⁵⁰ Their function is uncertain, and they may have been *ex-voto* offerings, architectural decoration, or used to cover urns in columbaria, walls with niches to store cremation urns. Similar plaques have been found elsewhere in the south of Spain, in the Balearics, and in North Africa, where they were probably made, providing visual evidence

of contact between these adjacent regions during this period. Archaeological studies have confirmed that trade with Africa, in the form of lamps, amphorae, and smaller oil containers, was particularly strong during the Byzantine occupation of the coasts of North Africa and of southeast Spain (Spania).¹⁵¹ After the Visigoths expelled the Byzantines around 625, the level of imports fell progressively during the remainder of the century, as did the quality of the pottery.¹⁵² This pattern is echoed by analysis of the transmission of North African texts to the peninsula.¹⁵³

The idea of Byzantine craftsmen working in the peninsula remains controversial.¹⁵⁴ Ruins of basilical churches are concentrated in the southeast of the peninsula, including eight on the Balearic Islands.¹⁵⁵ Given Spania's likely sphere of influence, and the Byzantines' swift occupation of the Balearic Islands in the sixth century, these buildings have traditionally been ascribed to Byzantine patrons and craftsmen.¹⁵⁶ No specific features link them to North African Byzantine churches, however, and these churches are notoriously problematic and difficult to date. For example, the basilica at Son Bou on Menorca has been compared to the church at El Bovalar, so may be fifth-century. Even so, it is difficult to deny that artists trained in that milieu must have been responsible for the baptismal font added to the basilica of San Pedro de Alcántara on the coast along from Málaga. The polygonal form of this font can be compared with those at Byzantine

147 Arce, 2007b, 256.

148 Sánchez Ramos, 2007, 423-39; Sánchez Ramos, 2009, 121-47.

149 Castelo Ruano, 1996, 467-536; Ruiz Prieto, 2012, 1-58.

150 Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/conservation-of-an-early-christianvisigoth-terracotta-relief-plaque/>.

151 Reynolds, 2005, 423-32; for another view, see Arce, 2005b, 353-55.

152 Wickham, 2005, 749.

153 Graham, 2011, 161.

154 Utrero, 2009c, 191-212; for a corpus of this material, see Vizcaino, 2009.

155 Ulbert, 1978, 139-81; Utrero, 2006a, 122.

156 Wood, 2010, 294; Utrero, 2009c, 191-92.

Sbeitla or Bekalta in Tunisia, which suggests that the Alcántara pool was also once covered by a fine carpet mosaic.¹⁵⁷ El Tolmo de Minateda (Hellín, Albacete) has been at the centre of this debate.¹⁵⁸ The site constitutes a hub that linked the old Roman road, Alcalá de Henares (Complutum)-Toledo-Cartagena, to the *Via Augusta*, a route that was still important under Islamic rule in al-Andalus. When the excavators first examined El Tolmo, they published it as a Byzantine adaptation of a Roman site, but it is now staunchly argued that the basilica is a new construction for the re-established Visigothic bishopric of Elo or Elotana.¹⁵⁹ It remains entirely possible, however, that the strategic site could have been developed by the Byzantines to defend their enclave, and that it was occupied by the Visigoths only after they withdrew from the peninsula in the 620s. The mention of the new bishopric shortly before that withdrawal, highlighted by the excavators, does not necessarily mean that the site was already in Visigothic hands. In the twelfth-century *reconquista* period, Sees were often named and filled before the territory had been secured.

In the northern margins of the Byzantine-occupied area, or the southern areas of Visigothic control, a residential structure was excavated at Pla Nadal outside Valencia in the 1980s.¹⁶⁰ The rest of the site remains unexcavated as it is on private land. This structure is often described as a 'villa', but the thickness of the rubble walls suggests a seriously fortified site. The reconstructed section is a rectangle that may have formed an entrance with towers on each side and a southern portico. Fragments of wood found on the site

indicate that it may have had an upper storey and a wooden roof. The lateral spaces were apparently vaulted with transverse arches and the lower ashlar voussoirs rest on classically moulded imposts, presumably reused. A number of other pieces of reused material, including columns and bases, a Corinthian capital with smooth leaves, and a piece of entablature with arched fluted panels remain at the site, whilst other pieces, including roughly incised conch shells on small capitals and an incised monogram within a wreath of floral scrollwork, were presumably carved for the purpose and are displayed in the Museo de Prehistoria in Valencia. Some see this site as a Visigothic palace, whilst others perceive a residence of the Byzantine enclave, and yet others a structure of the Islamic period.¹⁶¹ Further excavation may one day help to provide answers to this conundrum.

In comparison, there is little evidence for sixth-century building in the northwest of the peninsula, which was ruled by the Suevi until Leovigild's final campaign against them in 585. Martin of Braga is credited with the foundation of a monastery at Dumio, only two kilometres outside Braga.¹⁶² In that capacity he attended the First Council of Braga in 561, where the canons stated that offerings should be shared equally between the bishop, the clergy, and the upkeep and lighting of the relevant church. No offerings were to be given to founders, who were proscribed from building churches for financial gain.¹⁶³ The monastery of Dumio was built on the site of a suburban Roman villa near the Cávado river and within a network of Roman roads. A substantial part of the baths

157 Utrero, 2009c, 201-204.

158 Abad Casal, 2000, 193-221.

159 Abad Casal, 2012, 351-381.

160 Utrero, 2006a, 633; Navarro, 1989, 137-79; Chavarría, 2010a, 172.

161 Utrero, 2006a, 633; Collins, 2006, 206; Caballero, 2001, 140.

162 Linage, 1981, 307-21; Violante, 1999, 63-98.

163 Bowden, 2001, 56-68; Jones, 1993, 340-41; Chavarría, 2010b, 165-69.

complex of the villa still survives, as do the foundations of the church. This had a single nave with a trilobed apse and transept, a layout probably determined by one of the rooms in the baths complex.¹⁶⁴ If there was any stone liturgical furnishing, it has not survived *in situ*. The centre of the peninsula, where the Visigoths based their power, offers much less evidence of building than the Visigoths' reputation would suggest. In Alcalá de Henares (Complutum), where one of John of Biclar's great men (*virii illustres*) lived, the archaeologists have identified 'terminal deurbanization'. The monumental Roman buildings, including baths and the administrative basilica, were divided and occupied by small residential units.¹⁶⁵ Only the more affluent housing continued into the sixth century, and even that seems to have been abandoned by the seventh.¹⁶⁶ Yet Complutum is only 80 kilometres northeast of Toledo, in an area where the Visigoths are often believed to have undertaken some of their most innovative building in the sixth century.

John of Biclar says that King Leovigild founded a new city in 577-578, which he named Recópolis, and that he adorned it with amazing work both within the walls and outside them.¹⁶⁷ It is usually assumed that the city was founded *ex novo*, on a virgin site, but John of Biclar says only that Leovigild gave privileges to the people of the new city, which might refer simply to a change of status. This city is traditionally identified with an archaeological site at Zorita de los Canes in Guadalajara, about 100 kilometres northeast of Toledo, even though there is only circumstantial evidence for the identification, which rests largely on the discovery at the site of a hoard of coins minted

by Leovigild.¹⁶⁸ Zorita de los Canes is on the upper reaches of the river Tagus, about seventy kilometres to the east of the old Roman road that led from Zaragoza to Mérida via Toledo. It is thus not easily accessible by road, and lacks good communication routes, which makes it an odd choice for a new city. In its favour it has a good view of the surrounding countryside, large defensive walls, and a series of moorings on the river below the walls.¹⁶⁹ Scholars have speculated whether it functioned as a fortress against the Byzantines to the south but there is no definitive evidence for a fortified frontier (*limes*).¹⁷⁰ The choice of this site is, therefore, something of a mystery. One explanation could be the celebrated gold-bearing character of the river Tagus. If the site were the centre of a gold-panning industry, it would explain the need for defensive walls, for the moorings, and perhaps also the demand for an aqueduct and the presence of coins.¹⁷¹ Although only a few of the buildings of Recópolis have survived, archaeological excavations since the 1940s have shown that it had a large basilica and three long rectangular buildings. Those who see Zorita as Leovigild's Recópolis usually discern a palace in the long narrow buildings. Others see a large storage building for grain or other merchandise.¹⁷² The basilica had an apse, a single nave, and a transept, which led into a porticus, an ambulatory that extended around three sides of the nave. If this basilica belonged to Leovigild's city, it would be the only surviving monumental evidence of Arian Gothic

164 Fontes, 2012, 443-74.

165 Wickham, 2005, 662.

166 García Moreno, 1999.

167 Collins, 2006, 56; Arce, 2007b, 255-60.

168 Olmo, 2007, 181-96 or 98; Olmo, 2008, 40-63; for a more traditional view, see Ripoll, 2003, 123-148 and Chavarría, 2010b, 160-74.

169 Ripoll, 2003, 141-144.

170 Wood, 2010, 292-319.

171 Edmondson, 1989, 84-102.

172 Arce, 2010, 373-94; Arce, 2011b, 287-98.

liturgical practice.¹⁷³ Scholars generally dismiss any prior Roman or late antique occupation of the site, partly on the basis that Leovigild's city was new, but the plan of the basilica has much in common with pagan temples, which were sometimes built to provide protection for valuable stores. In short, it is possible that this site had been used for the collection of gold in the Roman period and that it was reoccupied by the Visigoths, who continued to use it as a source of gold for minting coins. A resurgence of small-scale mining activity has been identified in the northwest of the peninsula in the same period, c. 550 to c. 650, and Puche Riart has noted that many Visigothic settlements coincided with mining sites.¹⁷⁴ The Muslims later occupied the site where they manufactured glass. The site of Recópolis may still be unknown.

Toledo is reliably recorded as the site of King Leovigild's coronation, and a favoured place for royal ceremonial.¹⁷⁵ Almost in the centre of the peninsula, it combined a defensive site with good communication routes that connected easily along old Roman roads in all directions.¹⁷⁶ Yet physical evidence for the buildings of Visigothic Toledo is scant, despite extensive archaeological activity.¹⁷⁷ Documentary evidence records church councils at Toledo in 400, 527, and in 589 to mark the conversion of the Visigoths to Catholicism; another fifteen were to follow between 633 and c. 702.¹⁷⁸ This suggests that buildings suitable for hosting a

council already existed in Toledo before Recared's conversion in 587, including a church of Santa María whose location is unknown. John of Biclar celebrates Recared as the founder (*conditor*) of churches and monasteries and as their benefactor, although he does not say that they were newly built.¹⁷⁹ The *VPE* also corroborates the existence of a basilica in Toledo, as it tells how Leovigild tried to steal the pallium of St. Eulalia from Mérida so he could hang it in the Arian basilica in Toledo.¹⁸⁰ Other churches were consecrated in Toledo during the seventh century, including a church dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul which was established on a site that was either close to the old Roman military headquarters (*praetorium*), subsequently occupied by the Arab alcázar, or in the suburbs. It was from this church that the king departed on his military campaigns after a ceremony that was vividly preserved in the *Liber Ordinum* of the Old Hispanic liturgy; he probably celebrated his victories at the same church.¹⁸¹ The monastery of Agalí, somewhere in the suburbs of Toledo, was dedicated to SS. Cosmas and Damian, saints who were known as medical doctors, perhaps in an attempt to rival the healing role of the bishops of Mérida. Agalí became the main source of bishops for sixth and seventh-century Toledo, including Eladio, Eugenius, and Ildephonsus. As Roger Collins argued, the most blatant imitation of Mérida concerned the cult of St. Leocadia, after the Visigoths lost the tussle for St. Eulalia.¹⁸² The story of the martyrdom of Leocadia (*Passio*) was a literary creation of the seventh century, as it is one of the Datianus group that reworked extracts from other saints' lives.¹⁸³ There is no

173 Olmo, 1988, 178.

174 Sánchez Pardo, 2013, 150–51 and 157; Puche, 1996, 215; including Burguillos del Cerro, Sotiel Coronado, Río Tinto, Herrerías, and Castúlo (Linares).

175 Ripoll, 2003, 123–148, for Toledo, 134–141.

176 Carrobes, 2007, 17–20.

177 Ripoll, 2003, 138: 'In archaeological terms there is very little evidence for the royal city of Toletum although a considerable amount of building activity must be envisaged'.

178 Ripoll, 2003, 140.

179 Arce, 2007b, 255.

180 Fear, 1997, 6.12, 84.

181 McCormick, 1986, 308–12.

182 Collins, 1980, 189–219.

183 Castillo, 2005, 164.

independent record of St. Leocadia, and her basilica was probably created in a similar way, perhaps taking a late antique building and crafting it as the shrine of Leocadia and as the burial site of the bishops of Toledo. The basilica was described as being in the suburbs, but despite a range of suggested locations, none have been definitively confirmed by archaeology.¹⁸⁴ It purported to hold the relics of the saint and, according to calendars in tenth-century manuscripts, the building was augmented by King Sisebut and consecrated in 618. The most likely explanation for the disparity between the number of buildings described and the archaeological record is that the Visigoths used pre-existing buildings or constructed less durable structures in wood or weak masonry.

For the refurbishment and decoration of those buildings, Visigothic Toledo emulated Mérida but lacked highly accomplished craftsmen. As in Mérida, knowledge of sculptural decoration in Toledo has to rely on a collection of fragments.¹⁸⁵ Since 1969 most of these have been displayed in the church of San Román in the Museo de los Concilios de Toledo y de la Cultura Visigoda, thus mirroring the display in the church of Santa Clara at Mérida.¹⁸⁶ Other fragments are in the Museo Santa Cruz or embedded in buildings around Toledo (fig. 42). The Toledan collection of fragments, like that at Mérida, lacks provenances and dates. A few pilasters clearly imitate the columnar type of pilaster from Mérida, and roughly carved scalloped niches are now lodged in the fabric of San Andrés, of Santo Tomé, and on the Alcántara bridge. A chronicle written by an ecclesiastic connected to Córdoba after the end of Visigothic rule, known as *The Chronicle of 754*, makes a reference to the renovation of the city

of Toledo by King Wamba (r. 672-680) after his defeat of a rival. Whilst this literary description may be rhetorical, its details and the plausible triumphal context suggest that Wamba may indeed have put inscriptions carved 'with wonderful and elegant workmanship' (*mire et eleganti labore*) on the city's walls.¹⁸⁷ The chronicle states that he engraved epigrams 'with an iron stylus on the bright and shining marble', and set the names of the martyrs 'over the turrets on the gates'; these were presumably the saints who had defended the city and given him victory. In this way, Wamba inscribed his name on the pre-existing walls of the city, as his predecessor Recceswinth had on the votive crown. Nothing is known of the craftsmen who might have executed these inscriptions, and few references to artisans in this whole period have survived. One exception is another inscription probably from a place called Nativola near modern Granada, which talks of three shrines (*tabernacula*) 'built with the artisans of the estate and at his [Gundiliuva's] own expense'; the associated churches were consecrated c. 600 to St. Stephen the martyr, to St. John the Baptist, and to St. Vincent of Valencia. Although this is often thought to show that a noble (*vir illustris*) like Gundiliuva had slaves who could build churches, the meaning of *tabernacula* is not fixed, and could denote only chapels or even canopies over the altars.¹⁸⁸ What it does show is that Gundiliuva was continuing a Roman and late antique epigraphic habit. Since it brings together three separate examples of his patronage, this was probably Gundiliuva's funerary inscription, in line with other aristocratic epitaphs in churches and family monasteries in the east and in the west

184 Vives, 1963, 522; Velázquez 2000a, 554.

185 Barroso, 2009, 171-97.

186 Revuelta, 1979.

187 Wolf, 1990, 101-102; López Pereira, 1980, 52-57, paras. 35 and 36; Arce, 2007b, 255-60; Gimeno, 2009, 31-44.

188 Brown, 2012, 520-21; Vives, 1942, no. 303; Carbonell i Manils, 2010, 73-96.

Figure 42 Toledo, sculpted niche (Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo)



c. 600. Such inscriptions denoted ownership, status, learning, and perhaps most importantly recorded charitable giving to the Church in atonement for sins. Even for those who could not read them, these panels with engraved writing fulfilled a decorative purpose, and they may have had a performative role in commemoration and intercession.¹⁸⁹

Visigothic Standing Churches?

So far this chapter has found scant evidence for building by the Visigoths, or for any Visigothic-period construction, beyond refurbishment and extensions. The picture is diverse, but even Mérida, Toledo, Tarragona, and Barcelona have offered little in the way of substantial new structures. In 666 the Sixteenth Council of Toledo deplored the ‘ruinous and lamentable state of many churches because of their hurried

construction with insufficient resources’, which may suggest that attempts had been made to put up new structures but they failed because of lack of expertise and suitable materials.¹⁹⁰ This fits with the archaeological view that sees a move from complexity to simplicity between the sixth and seventh centuries, with a gradual and fragmented decline in trade. Despite this overview, a number of robust standing buildings continue to be attributed to the Visigoths in the seventh century. Since it is difficult to see them as any kind of natural development from the basilicas of the fifth and early sixth centuries, I shall discuss them at more length in Chapter 5. Here I shall concentrate on the arguments for occupation of pre-existing buildings on these sites during the Visigothic period.

Roger Collins has noted that, aside from three exceptions – Barcelona, El Tolmo de Minateda, and Valencia, all discussed above – the constructions proposed for the seventh century are rural.¹⁹¹ It may be significant that three of these widely dispersed sites were notable for their springs: Santa Lucía del Trampal, San Juan de Baños, and San Torcuato at Santa Comba de Bande.¹⁹² The church at Santa Lucía del Trampal at Alcuéscar is located in the hills north of Mérida, close to an official stopping place (*mansio*) on the *Via de la Plata* and to the fortified town of Montánchez. San Juan de Baños lies in the centre of the peninsula on the road from Valladolid, by the river Pisuerga, less than ten kilometres outside Palencia and close to the site of the suburban Roman villa at San Isidro de Dueñas. Santa Comba de Bande (Ourense) is situated in the northwest, near a *mansio* on the *Via Nova* above the Roman military camp of *Aquae Querquennis* by the river Limia. All three of these churches may

¹⁸⁹ Rico, 2009, 7–53.

¹⁹⁰ Vives, 1963, 484–85.

¹⁹¹ Collins, 2009, 331–37.

¹⁹² Collins, 2006, 191; Sauer, 2011, 534.

have replaced earlier buildings, although the archaeology is far from certain. One piece of suggestive documentary evidence comes from the seventh-century encyclopaedist, Isidore. His chapter on sacred buildings offers little help in assessing the extent of contemporary construction, but it uses the word 'now' (*nunc*) on two occasions, once to make a linguistic point about basilicas and more relevantly to discuss 'cleansing shrines (*delubra*) with fountains where people used to purify themselves before entering'. He goes on to suggest that they were reused for baptism: 'Now they are temples with holy fountains, in which the born-again faithful are purified'. This could imply that Christians adopted some pagan sites with springs as places of baptism, without any apparent concern that they still harboured demons. Santa Lucía del Trampal is partly built with reused masonry and inscriptions from a Roman temple dedicated to Ataecina (fig. 43), a local goddess of fertility and the underworld, perhaps related to the Roman goddess Proserpina, both of them associated with water in Lusitania.¹⁹³ The spring at Trampal still flows strongly and may have been used in the Roman period for ironworks.¹⁹⁴ Excavations were carried out between 1986 and 1991 by Luis Caballero, alongside a substantial restoration. He has dated the standing building to c. 800 on the basis of comparisons with eighth- and ninth-century masonry in Mérida, but the dating remains problematic.¹⁹⁵ The plan of the church is highly unusual with three square chapels at the east end opening separately off a transept, whilst a narrow passage connects the transept to a small nave rebuilt in the thirteenth century. Other structures, altered and divided at various periods, flank the central nave. The excavators said that

they had not been able to identify any earlier structures on the site as much of the ground had been levelled. It remains possible, however, that the nave was built on the foundations of the inner chamber (*cella*) of the Roman temple, which might go some way towards explaining the idiosyncratic plan. Eastern chapels were often added to such chambers when Roman temples were converted.¹⁹⁶ The building has been stripped of its liturgical furnishings, although fixings suggest that the central altar had five supports, a central pillar that held the relics and four legs for the altar table. Isaac Sastre has studied the form of altars in the seventh century, and in that context considers the possibility that this vestige indicates a Visigothic phase on the site or if it merely shows that altars with five supports were constructed as late as the eighth century and beyond.¹⁹⁷ One of the slabs dedicated to Ataecina was cut to provide a slot for a chancel barrier, perhaps a symbolic act, or merely practical. Sculpted fragments of liturgical furniture were found on the site and have been dated either to the seventh or ninth centuries. It is likely that Trampal was the site of a Roman temple no longer used for worship by the end of the fourth century. The site could have continued in use for farming, and the building could have been used as a residence, as was a temple in Mérida. After a significant hiatus, the site was reappropriated for Christian worship. The standing church is post-Visigothic, but it remains possible that the pre-existing structure was minimally converted, perhaps with the addition of an eastern chapel, and used as a centre for baptism during the Visigothic period.

The other two sites with springs, Baños and Bande, are located in the northwest quadrant of the peninsula, albeit far from each other,

¹⁹³ Abascal, 1995, 80-105.

¹⁹⁴ Caballero, 1999b.

¹⁹⁵ Caballero, 1999b; Caballero, 1991b, 471-96.

¹⁹⁶ Bayliss, 2004, 47.

¹⁹⁷ Sastre, 2009, 309-30.

Figure 43 Santa Lucía del Trampal (Alcuéscar, Cáceres), exterior

and both close to Roman building activity. San Juan de Baños is the key monument in the expanded group, because an inscription dates its foundation by King Recceswinth to 652 or 661-662.¹⁹⁸ The majority of scholars have thus maintained that this church is in essence seventh-century, whereas Luis Caballero has led the view that it is an entity of *c.* 900.¹⁹⁹ King Recceswinth provides the main evidence that the Visigothic rulers continued the association with this fertile area around the valley of the river Duero that had been enjoyed by powerful imperial Hispano-Roman families in late antiquity. From the writings of Isidore and Ildephonsus it can be deduced that all the Visigothic kings, except for Recceswinth and Bamba, died in Toledo, even if the exact

location of their burials remains a matter of dispute.²⁰⁰ King Recceswinth, in contrast, died in 672 at Gerticos, his own villa estate and, according to the ninth-century *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, was buried there in the manner of a Roman or late antique aristocrat.²⁰¹ The site may be marked by the tenth-century monastery of Bamba, on the river Hornija to the west of Valladolid.²⁰² The details of the inscription at San Juan de Baños help to tie that site to the Visigothic king. Its reference to Recceswinth's love of the name of St. John the Baptist could relate to the Visigoths' devotion to that saint from the time of King Reccared's conversion

¹⁹⁸ Gil, 2008, 371-72.

¹⁹⁹ Caballero, 1998, 181-242; Utrero, 2010, 9-10.

²⁰⁰ Alonso, 2012, 205-213; Alonso, 2003, 362-75; Alonso, 2008, 13-27.

²⁰¹ Wolf, 1990, 129; Alonso, 2008, 19.

²⁰² Alonso, 2013, 135-55 with a short English text; Alonso, 2012, 207; Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 193-202.

to Catholicism, when Pope Gregory the Great sent him relic gifts to celebrate his membership of the Roman Church.²⁰³ These included hairs of St. John the Baptist as well as a fragment of the True Cross (*lignum crucis*) and splinters from the chains of St. Peter.²⁰⁴ The inscription may also reflect a contemporary concern that kings should make endowments from their own estates and by implication not from royal taxes or the treasury; on the other hand it may merely be another way of saying 'at his own expense'. The king's personal gift to the saint also binds him in a similar social relationship with the Baptist to that enjoyed by the bishops of Mérida with St. Eulalia. The panel is almost definitely a reused Roman slab, and it may even have other carving on the reverse. It is now mounted above the triumphal arch, flanked by four conch shells and discs, which may once have decorated the roof of the church. Lacking any structural function, these pieces seem to be primarily a display of *spolia* contemporary with this positioning of the inscription.

Recently scholars have begun to question the epigraphy, in particular the extreme regularity of the lettering, which is unusual in Visigothic inscriptions.²⁰⁵ This may indicate that the inscription was copied in the early tenth century, and its current display may date from the same period or reflect a later antiquarian perspective.²⁰⁶ The discovery of a sixteenth-century record of an almost identical inscription from a church in San Román de Hornija has raised further questions as to its validity.²⁰⁷ Excavations exposed the original plan of San Juan de Baños as a three-aisled basilica with a small square western portico

and a distinctive tripartite east end with three separate square chapels. The church is built of large and mostly well-cut stones fitted together irregularly with little mortar, probably reused Roman masonry. Indeed, the proportions of the square nave, approximately 10m x 10m, suggest that it may have also reused Roman foundations, even if it has not so far been possible to demonstrate this archaeologically.²⁰⁸ Eight reused Roman columns support the arcade, in six cases together with their Roman capitals and imposts. Two fine grey marble columns were selected to flank the entrance to the sanctuary, a feature which I shall discuss further in Chapter 5, alongside an argument for the tenth-century 'Mozarabic' nature of this church. Two stringcourse friezes are found in the church: one is fragmentary; the other, mostly intact, runs around the upper part of the church and recurs in the sanctuary.²⁰⁹ The fragmentary example is a simple guilloche, which is likely to be late antique or Visigothic *spolia*, and can be seen on the wall of what was once the interior of the right-hand apse, before fourteenth-century alterations reused it as an exterior wall. The more dominant frieze has a late antique or Byzantine motif of repeating circles, divided internally by rosettes with four long petals and a central boss (fig. 44). It is a widespread motif, familiar from Roman mosaics, from metalwork including the borders of the crown of Receswinth, from sculptural fragments of a low chancel barrier in Barcelona, and from pilasters at Badajoz and Almendral. But is this decoration at Baños Visigothic work or a reinvention of the tenth century? Simple analysis of the motifs would argue for the former, but the application of the motif as a unifying architectural frieze differentiates it from the use of similar motifs

203 Castillo, 2005, 173.

204 Castillo, 2005, 171.

205 Hoyo, 2006, 90-98; Santiago, 322; Rico, 2009, 7-53.

206 Caballero, 2006b, 236-38.

207 Velázquez, 2000b, 295-307.

208 Palol's excavations of 1982 discounted this possibility.

209 Caballero, 1998, 181-242.

in more secure Visigothic-period contexts, where ornament is concentrated on liturgical elements or particular architectural features. Like Trampal, the site of San Juan de Baños may have been occupied in the Visigothic period. If it was the site of a temple, King Recceswinth may have renovated it as a place of baptism, perhaps giving it a dedicatory inscription to attest his gift, in the same way that he assigned the votive crown. The church of San Torcuato at Santa Comba de Bande also has a unifying frieze on the interior here decorated with a simple rope pattern. In common with the other two churches with springs, this church employs reused Roman masonry from a nearby site. Archaeology is yet to determine whether there was a previous structure in this exact position, although its proximity to the spring suggests that the site could have been marked by a shrine or a *mansio*.

The other key buildings in this expanded group are, in Portugal, São Frutuoso de Montélios and São Gião de Nazaré, and, in Spain, Santa María de Quintanilla de la Viñas and San Pedro de la Nave. The first of these has a plausible historical context in the Visigothic period and could be seen as part of a wider Christian topography in Galicia.²¹⁰ An anonymous Life of St. Fructuosus credits him with the foundation of several monasteries across greater Galicia.²¹¹ Like the Cantabrian St. Aemilian before him, this Visigothic nobleman turned to a peripatetic ascetic life and sought high deserted mountains.²¹² In one of these remote settings in the Aquilanos mountains, south of the town of Ponferrada, according to the *Vita*, he established a monastic site that had a long life under the later name of San

Figure 44 San Juan de Baños (Palencia), reused Roman column at the chancel arch



Pedro de los Montes. Like most celebrated ascetics he subsequently became part of the established church, and was ordained bishop of Braga.²¹³ There he built another monastery between Braga and Dumio, on the crest of a small hill, for his burial in 665.²¹⁴ This burial site is traditionally identified with São Frutuoso de Montélios, which indeed lies outside Braga on the way to Dumio. A small centralised structure, built of fine ashlar masonry, is all that survives of an earlier monastery, as a large Franciscan church now occupies the rest of the site.²¹⁵ The structure is cruciform in plan with square exterior walls, but on the interior the

²¹⁰ Sánchez Pardo, 2013, 140-68; Sánchez Pardo, 2012, 395-413.

²¹¹ Dodds, 1990, 12; Fear, 1997, xxxvi-vii and 123-144.

²¹² Fear, 1997, 128.

²¹³ Fear, 1997, 130.

²¹⁴ Fear, 1997, 142; Chavarría, 2010b, 169-70.

²¹⁵ Utrero, 2006a, 607-10.

arms of the cross are horseshoe in plan, except for entrance formed by the western arm.²¹⁶ Pediments and blind arcading with mitred and semi-circular blind arches articulate the exterior. The building is thus often compared to the brick-built Byzantine mausoleum of Galla Placidia (d. 450) in Ravenna, and a similar design of alternating mitred and semi-circular arches under a pediment is found, for example, on the baptistry of Saint-Jean at Poitiers (c. 700-c. 1100).²¹⁷ Montélios was substantially reconstructed in the 1930s, and a plan, as well as a series of black and white photographs from that time, shows that part of the current structure, including the exterior arcosolium and the eastern arm, post-dates that intervention.²¹⁸ Several scholars continue to maintain that this building is fundamentally Visigothic, others see it as 'Mozarabic', and an intermediate view accepts a Visigothic-period foundation followed by a tenth- or even early-eleventh-century restoration.²¹⁹ The building incorporates *spolia* from the Roman or late antique periods, notably columns and capitals, and its plan recalls Roman mausolea, although no Roman foundations have been identified on the site. The dating of the *ex profeso* sculpture remains problematic, including the recarved pieces. Large-scale restoration of two other disputed buildings in Portugal, Nazaré, west of Alcobaça and close to the coast, and São Pedro de Balsemão (Lamego), further north and inland, has obscured their origins. Nazaré has some antique *spolia*, but typologically it belongs to the ninth or even tenth century.²²⁰ Balsemão was so restored in the seventeenth century that it might be better described as an

antiquarian building that attempts to recreate one of the Visigothic period. Quintanilla de las Viñas and San Pedro de la Nave are now the most rural of these sites: Quintanilla lies in a network of Roman communications linked to the city of Clunia; the site of Nave may once have been a *mansio* near a crossroad, where a north-south Roman road may have met another that crossed the river Esla. Only the east end of Quintanilla has survived, and San Pedro de la Nave has been moved in its entirety to a new site. Both were constructed with reused, but also reworked, ashlar blocks from Roman sites. San Pedro de la Nave, along with San Juan de Baños, also used wood from earlier structures, as beams have been radiocarbon-dated to the late Roman period and clamps to the seventh century.²²¹ Settlement on either site before the early Middle Ages remains difficult to prove.

The interpretation presented in this chapter diverges substantially from the traditional narrative. By setting aside the high-level metalwork and innovative architecture previously attributed to the Visigoths, it presents a different view of their culture that brings the peninsula more in line with the rest of Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries. Many uncertainties remain, but essentially the peninsula appears fragmented in the Visigothic period, with only pockets of artistic expertise. The pervasive architectural images are those of reuse: the Roman temple in Mérida converted into residences and surrounded by other lean-to houses, and the structures similarly clustered around the basilica at El Bovalar. Beyond practicality, such reuse fits with Visigothic-period taste, a wish to identify with the Roman legacy, a liking for stylistic juxtaposition, and a love of

216 Utrero, 2009b, 137-39.

217 McClendon, 2005, 38-39.

218 Utrero, 2009b, 139.

219 McClendon, 2005, 38-40; Fernandes, 2009, 247-49.

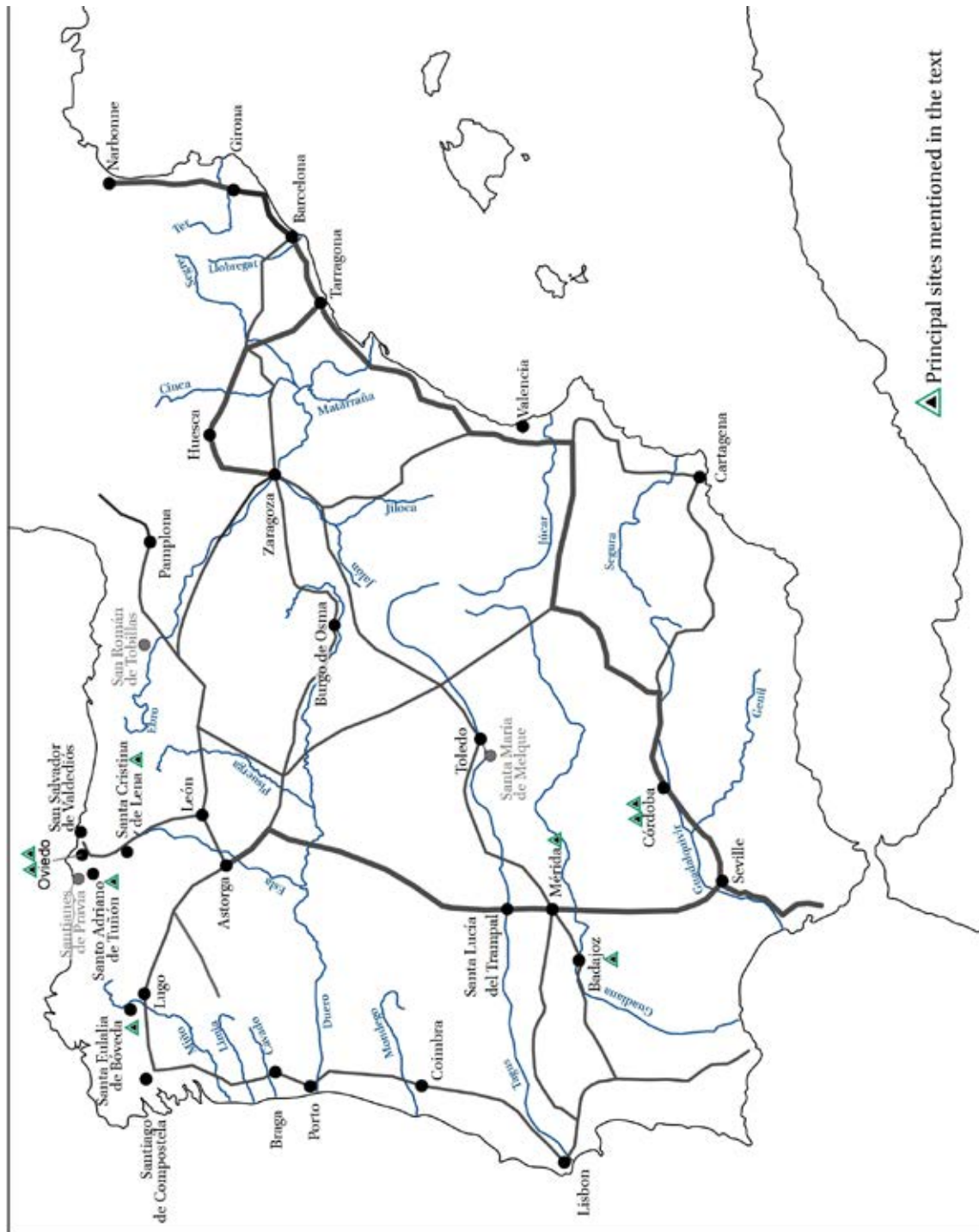
220 Caballero, 2003b, 75-80.

221 Utrero, 2006b, 3431-34; Alonso Mattheías, 2004, 209-37; Quirós, 2009, 313-24; some of these results may be revised in the light of more recent protocols.

accretion. Inscriptions were likewise used to claim ownership of pre-existing objects and buildings. King Recceswinth's crown has stood for so long as the acme of Visigothic artistry that perhaps it can now epitomise the way in which

Visigothic Hispania claimed the imperial past by grafting onto finer structures. Aspects of this mentality would continue into the eighth century, but new access to expertise began to stimulate innovation.

Map V Map of the Peninsula in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries



▲ Principal sites mentioned in the text

4 The Eighth and Ninth Centuries

Re-emergence and Invention

Studies of eighth- and ninth-century Christian art in the Spanish peninsula have traditionally used the label 'Asturian art' and treated it as an isolated phenomenon born of an incipient *reconquista* ideology. This chapter will argue that it was, on the contrary, far from isolated geographically, and that the rhythms of its production responded to those in the outside world, both north and south. The myth of the brave little kingdom that began the *reconquista* has to give way to another story. When Asturias exhibited military prowess, it could be directed at the Vikings as well as against al-Andalus. The rulers of the north and south shared the exposed Atlantic coast, and road travel across the centre occurred more often than the boundaries on maps suggest. Relations between north and south were more nuanced and more interesting than the traditional narrative, allowing both artistic and intellectual interaction. The analysis that follows will suggest that the renewal of building in the peninsula, which began in Córdoba in the second half of the eighth century, did not occur in the north until a sudden influx of wealth in the mid-ninth century enabled the purchase of the necessary expertise. In the south the same period saw new cultural stimuli flood into al-Andalus from Baghdad, whilst across the Pyrenees the court of Charles the Bald built on the cultural revival of Charlemagne. Around 900, internal conflict within the Muslim territories of al-Andalus briefly allowed the Christians of Asturias to imagine a future in which they might claim control of the peninsula. They expressed that optimistic vision through an antique architectural and decorative vocabulary that had been developed by the Byzantines, the Carolingians,

and the Umayyads. The Asturian route into that vocabulary, and their inventive use of it, will be a major theme in this chapter.

711

The year 711 records the end of Visigothic rule in Spain. According to the universal Mozarabic Chronicle of 754, the preceding years had brought internal strife, famine, and plague, brightened only by the presence of some learned bishops of Toledo.¹ That chronicle and the later Arabic sources agree on the main events of the invasion.² The North African Berber forces of Tāriq entered Spain through Gibraltar and penetrated the peninsula along the same Roman roads that had facilitated the campaigns of the Visigothic armies. Arab forces, following under Mūsa b. Nusayr, the governor of Ifrīqiya, secured the south including Mérida, Seville, and Córdoba, and most of the river valleys, where they settled.³ The Berbers were given lands on the mesetas in the centre and north. Recent scholarship has interrogated the likely background of Tāriq's North African Berber troops and suggested that they may not have been as alien as the Chronicle implies. Several of them could have been Latin-speakers who might have worked more easily with the Hispano-Roman and Visigothic populations in Iberia than the usual stereotype of the desert

¹ Wolf, 2011, 23-37 and 91-128; for an Arabic account of the invasion see James, 2009, 49-58; Clarke, 2012.

² Kennedy, 1991, 255-56.

³ Kennedy, 1991, 2002, 258; Clarke, Nicola, 2012, 28 and 36.

invaders.⁴ These forces conquered through a mix of surrender treaties and bloodshed; the latter was concentrated in major cities, above all in Toledo.⁵ In 714 Mūsa's army took over Toledo as a base from which to target the Ebro valley, especially Zaragoza and Lleida, and thence up the *Via Augusta* to Barcelona, and beyond the Pyrenees into *Septimania*. The new Muslim governors, some twenty of them between 711 and 756, recognised the ultimate authority of the Caliphate in Damascus, but they reported to the governors of Ifrīqīya in Qayrawan (Tunisia), and thus threatened to make Hispania a provincial hinterland. Archaeology has nothing to tell about this change of rule, and everyday life, though diverse across the peninsula, seems to have continued without any obvious change.⁶ Nor is it possible to ascribe any standing buildings to this period with confidence, whether Christian or Muslim. The sites of Santa Lucía del Trampal in the west and Melque in the centre both show evidence of continuing occupation, but for different reasons their dates of construction remain contested. Such a low level of architectural activity would not be out of step with the rest of western Europe at this time. The Arabs and Berbers probably occupied strongholds associated with the previous ruling minority, and it is likely that most of the population continued to live in modified pre-existing buildings. Within the cities, Christian and Jewish communities were both protected and regulated as other 'peoples of the book', but countryside populations may have experienced less control and been left to fend for themselves. The fate of the deposed Visigothic ruling families is unclear. Occasional figures feature in Arabic sources,

but their historical existence is no more reliable than the Christian mythology, which saw refugees fleeing to the far north, where a tiny group of survivors supposedly held out near Gijón.⁷

The legend of Pelayo (*Pelagius*) and the battle of Covadonga comes from the early tenth-century Chronicle of Alfonso III (Rotense version).⁸ This chronicle encapsulates the ideologies of c. 900 and projects them on to the eighth century. It is a story of Visigothic resurrection, of the perils of intermarriage and assimilation, and of divine victory in the face of overwhelming odds. Pelayo is depicted as the swordbearer of the last two failed Visigothic kings, related to them but untainted by rule. He has fled with his sister to Gijón on the northern coast, but the Berber governor Munnuza tricks his sister into marriage as soon as he has despatched Pelayo as an envoy to Córdoba. Pelayo escapes across a river and into the mountains, for the land is clearly working to protect him. He joins other fugitives and finds shelter for them in a great cave on Mount Auseva. The Chronicle continues to tell how, once elected leader, Pelayo is tempted by the treacherous Bishop Oppa to 'enjoy the partnership of the Chaldeans and take advantage of many benefits', but he resists. When the enemies' catapulted stones fall in the cave close to the shrine of the Virgin Mary, they rebound onto 'the Chaldeans', the Chronicle's name for the Arabs and Berbers. The enemy casualties at Covadonga are implausibly given as 124,000, with another 63,000 destroyed by a divine avalanche. By the end peace reigns, and 'the country was populated and the church was restored'.⁹ This myth tells us much about the imagination of Christians

4 Wright, 2012a, 35-54; Wright, 2012b, 105-107; for 711, see Manzano, 1994, 83-96; Manzano, 1999, 32-52.

5 Kennedy, 2007, 308-23.

6 Wickham, 2005, 751-57.

7 Collins, 2012, 5-6.

8 Wolf, 2011, 38-49.

9 Wolf, 2011, 133-36, Chronicle of Alfonso III (*Rotense Version*); Gil, 1985, 124-30, paras. 9-11.

who lived in the north in the second half of the ninth century, and its legacy survives to this day in restorations and commemorations.¹⁰ As for the early eighth century, no contemporary Christian text corroborates the reign of Pelayo (718-737) or the supposed battle of Covadonga in 718, and there is no mention of either in any later Arabic text. The Rotense version of the Chronicle of Alfonso III says that Pelayo's son constructed a basilica dedicated to the Holy Cross 'with marvellous workmanship'.¹¹ Yet no archaeological trace of this survives, and the most that can be said is that the site could have provided a good defensive position in fertile Cantabria with a cave and water to make it habitable. Extensive later building on the site, or restoration, hinders any attempts to interrogate it in depth. Munnuza, the Muslim who was administrator (*prefectus*) in Gijón, may be a better reflection of reality.¹²

The Early Kingdom of Asturias

The eighth and ninth centuries are generously supplied with chronicles: the Chronicle of 754; the Chronicle of Alfonso III, in two versions, *Rotense* and *Oviedo/Ad Sebastianum*; the Chronicle of Albelda; and the Prophetic Chronicle of 883.¹³ All were found as a result of research by Gómez Moreno in the early 1930s. Whereas he found the majority in late ninth- or tenth-century manuscripts, the *Oviedo/Ad Sebastianum* version of the Chronicle of Alfonso III is preserved only in a sixteenth-century codex.¹⁴ As it is also the chronicle with the most explicit Gothic ideology, its evidence has to be

used with caution. These chronicles have been allowed to determine much of the art history of the period and have distorted it in several instances. As early as 1989 Roger Collins set out the uncertainties that should attend this reliance on ideological narratives, and the last twenty years have seen much archaeological work undertaken in an attempt to extricate the buildings from their textual mesh.¹⁵ This has meant a dramatic increase in the amount of data available, but its interpretation has sometimes remained ensnared by the expectations engendered by the chronicles.

Julio Escalona has shown how in different ways the three chronicles crafted Alfonso I (r. 739-757) as an ideal victorious ancestor for Alfonso III (r. 866-911).¹⁶ Without this account, Alfonso I would be little more than a name. In Asturias during the first half of the eighth century, a number of noble families, probably both indigenous and new arrivals, vied for power. Although the chronicles attribute 'many basilicas' to the Cantabrian Alfonso I, the lack of further detail suggests that this too may be rhetorical. Intermarriage doubtless played a part in the outcome of this manoeuvring for position, and the chronicles say that Alfonso I was Pelayo's son-in-law. Alfonso I in turn gave his daughter Adosinda in marriage to a man called Silo, who was to rule from 774 to 783; his power base, according to the Chronicle of Albelda, was the old Hispano-Roman area of Pravia. His main residence may have been at Santianes de Pravia, 37 km west of modern-day Gijón, on the river Narcea, and down river from the confluence with the river Nalón. Santianes is a fertile valley that the ruling families of the local people, the Paesici, might indeed have chosen as the site

10 Boyd, 2002, 37-64.

11 Wolf, 2011, 136.

12 Gil, 1985, 122; Aguirre Cano, 2013, 12.

13 Wreglesworth, 2010, 287-89, 400.

14 Gil, 1985, 289.

15 Collins, 1989, 1-18.

16 Escalona, 2004, 223-62.

for one or more villas, which could have been occupied by Silo.¹⁷

In Silo's case the chronicles do not mention any patronage, but in 1975 a large fragment of limestone was excavated on the site of the church of Santianes de Pravia that bears part of an acrostic. Reconstructed, this substantial slab (45 x 53 x 12 cm) with 285 squares forms a palindrome and repeats the words *SILO PRINCEPS FECIT* (Prince Silo made/ordered to be made). Antiquarians from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century had mentioned it, or at least fragments of it.¹⁸ Yet this stone may not be contemporary with the reign of Silo, especially as a later date has been proposed for the much-restored church of Santianes de Pravia on the basis of an analysis of its architecture and decoration.¹⁹ Such acrostics were popular in tenth-century manuscripts as full-page miniatures and in the text. Most pertinently, a hymn to St. James, *O Dei Verbum*, uses wordplay to spell out the name of Silo's successor, Mauregatus (r. 783-788), using the first letters of its initial lines.²⁰ So it is possible that the acrostic originally appeared in a manuscript, and that the stone carving copied the manuscript at a later date. In 785, after the death of Silo, his widow, Adosinda, became a *deo dedicata*, a woman who devoted the remainder of her life to God in a monastery but did not become a nun. A member of the elite who attended her ceremony of profession was Beatus of Liébana, probably abbot of the monastery of San Martín de Turieno (later Santo Toribio de Liébana).²¹

Almost ten years before, in 776, Beatus had compiled a commentary on the book of the Apocalypse that was later to become the most elaborately illuminated text in Spain from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. At Adosinda's ceremony, Beatus and Etherius, bishop of Osma, were shown a letter from Elipandus, the archbishop of Toledo. The letter accused them of heresy and of being agents of the Antichrist. Although exactly what they had done to merit such a charge remains uncertain, they had presumably addressed the archbishop on the doctrinal issue of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Elipandus, who was already fighting heresies in Toledo, may have seen this as an open challenge to his authority over the Church in the peninsula.²² His letter expressed outrage that Liébana should dare to instruct Toledo, perhaps out of frustration that it was increasingly difficult to exercise control over his dispersed Christian congregations. This was to erupt into the Adoptionist Controversy over Christ's supposed adoption of his human nature, involving Felix, bishop of Urgell, far to the northeast, and Emperor Charlemagne. The geographic extent of this debate implies that an exchange of letters between Toledo, Liébana, Urgell, and Aachen was unexceptional in the late eighth century.

Early Construction in Córdoba

After 756, a new emir took control in Córdoba, 'Abd al-Rahmān I (r. 756-788), possibly with the support of a contingent of Syrian soldiers who had been diverted from North Africa to al-Andalus in 741.²³ As the last surviving member of the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus, the emir had his own mythology, which helped to

17 Fernández Conde, 2000, 145; González y Fernández Vallés, 1979, 87-104.

18 Gimeno, 2012, 13-26.

19 Caballero, 2012a, 89-123; Caballero, 2010a, 11-90; Utrero, 2006a, 467-69.

20 Fletcher, 1984, 55-57; Díaz y Díaz, 1966, 457-502; for manuscripts with acrostics, see Williams, 1994a, 16-17 and Williams, 1972-4, 223-35.

21 Williams, 1994, 13-17.

22 Collins, 1995a, 206-209.

23 Collins, 2012, 8-9; Manzano, 2006, 87-129.

confirm his legitimacy as ruler.²⁴ The rest of his family had been massacred by the 'Abbāsids, but 'Abd al-Rahmān escaped to take refuge in North Africa, where the Umayyads had allies. From there he entered Spain and quickly established himself in Córdoba by defeating the previous ruler, Yūsuf, who was preoccupied by a revolt in Zaragoza.²⁵ Over the next twenty years 'Abd al-Rahmān I gradually extended his control over the south of the peninsula. He brought to this task the knowledge and expertise acquired by the Umayyads over the preceding century, and their experience in building. He combined this with nostalgia for his Syrian homeland, and is credited with introducing the palm tree to al-Andalus.²⁶

The Umayyad caliphs had appropriated, selected from, and re-invented the art and architecture of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires that they had conquered.²⁷ 'Abd al-Rahmān I and his craftsmen looked back to their greatest achievements, the al-Aqsā mosque in Jerusalem (691-692) and the Great Mosque of Damascus (705-715), and began one of the most distinctive monuments ever to be built in Spain, the Great Mosque of Córdoba.²⁸ 'Abd al-Rahmān I's mosque was relatively small, but apparently sufficient to accommodate all the Muslims in Córdoba together at Friday prayers in 786 when it was dedicated. Like its predecessor in Damascus, it was a hypostyle mosque with a forest of columns, all Roman or late antique *spolia*, as were their capitals. Córdoba had many Roman and late antique structures, and the mosque was probably built on the site of the old Roman administrative headquarters, which

in turn would have been occupied during the Visigothic period.²⁹ As the available columns were of uneven lengths and too short to support a high roof, the technical solution was to create two tiers of brick and stone arches (fig. 45), a feature that also referenced the two tiers in the sanctuary of the Great Mosque of Damascus. The arches that form the arcades at Córdoba are constructed of alternating brick and stone, a Roman technique that can be seen most clearly now on the aqueduct arches at Mérida but was widespread in late antique Spain and Portugal, as well as in Syria where the technique had been maintained.³⁰ The upper tier is formed of stilted arches, but the lower tier of wide horseshoe arches, a form that also recalled the Great Mosque of Damascus, where a clear horseshoe arch marked the western doorway and a less defined arcade surrounded the courtyard (*sahn*).³¹ Although only two fragments survive, the first mihrab at Córdoba has been plausibly reconstructed as a conch niche with two borders surrounding the shell: the inner order a simple narrow plait and the outer order a wider frieze of acanthus leaves.³² Thus its form may have reinvented the sixth-century conch niche found at Mérida, purged of its Christian iconography, and without the same plasticity.

'Abd al-Rahmān I is also credited with restoring the roads and repairing one of the Roman aqueducts at Córdoba, in true euergetical fashion, as well as acquiring a suburban villa estate, al-Rusāfa.³³ Many aspects of this activity

24 Safran, 2000, 127-40.

25 Rosser-Owen, 2010, 13, 19 and 22.

26 Dodds, 1992, 15; Ibn 'Idhārī, 1948-51, 5.12; Ruggles, 2011a, 114-16.

27 Arce, Ignacio, 2008, 491-537.

28 Creswell, 1940, 139; Ruggles, 2011a, 112-14.

29 For arguments in favour of the Visigothic church of San Vicente being under the mosque, see Marfil, 2006, 35-58; Ruggles, 2011b, 56.

30 Arce, Ignacio, 2008, 506-508; for a possible model on the site of the Great Mosque, see Marfil, 2006, 48; Feijoo, 2006, 145-166.

31 Creswell, 1932, 165-73.

32 Fernández-Puertas, 2009, 58-67 and 299-305.

33 Ruggles, 2003, 37-45; Murillo, 2009, 449-82; Anderson, 2013, 16-18; for the aqueduct, see Ventura, 1993.

Figure 45 Córdoba, arches of the Great Mosque, first phase

were mirrored in Constantinople and elsewhere in the Byzantine Empire. In Constantinople the aqueduct of Valens was repaired, as was the church of St. Eirene, which had suffered earthquake damage. In accordance with the iconoclast approach that was to become Byzantine policy in 754, its apse mosaic held only a single cross with flared arms outlined against the gold background.³⁴ In the last decades of the eighth century several monasteries were constructed in Bithynia (northwest Asia Minor), which found innovative ways to reuse columns and capitals from local sites, although none of them used the solution identified at Córdoba.³⁵ Around the same time Emperor Charlemagne was constructing his palace complex far to the north in Aachen, and he too was using

spolia, including substantial amounts of cut stone from Ravenna.³⁶ Some of this material may once have been brought from Rome by the Gothic ruler Theodoric in a conscious effort to preserve the legacy of the past.³⁷ Classical revivalism in building was not the only interest shared by the Andalusí Umayyads and the Carolingian Franks, as the Carolingians also wanted to acquire territory in the peninsula.

Contact with the Carolingians

Although none of the invading Arab and Berber groups seems to have settled in the northwest of the peninsula, some had retained a hold on the northeast as far as the Pyrenees, with a

34 Cormack, 2000, 91-98.

35 Cormack, 2000, 98.

36 Nelson, 2000, 150.

37 Brenk, 1987, 103-109.

high degree of autonomy from Córdoba. When 'Abd al-Rahmān I tried to impose his authority on these northeastern territories in 778, the result was rebellion. Although the sources are imprecise, the rebellion involved the two Muslim governors, Yusuf al-Fihri of Zaragoza and Sulayman al-Arabi of Barcelona. Envoys went to Emperor Charlemagne in Paderborn, and two armies set off, one along the *Via Augusta* towards Barcelona and a second through the Roncesvalles pass towards Zaragoza. On arrival at Zaragoza, however, Charlemagne met resistance, and had to return without payment or booty. If this was a failed mercenary undertaking, it might explain why Charlemagne's army razed the walls of Pamplona, as reported by Einhard, Charlemagne's biographer, and perhaps the burning and destruction of the village of El Bovalar around the same time. Such vengeful reprisals might in turn provide a rationale for the Basques' massacre of the rear-guard of Charlemagne's army at Roncesvalles. Despite this unpromising start, the Franks under Charlemagne's son, Louis 'the Pious', king of Aquitaine, did not give up their ambitions in the northeast of the peninsula, but concentrated their military activity along the *Via Augusta*. Girona opened its gates to them in 785, and they took Barcelona in 801 to make the river Llobregat the southern boundary of the Carolingian March, a line that was not to be extended for another three centuries.³⁸ From the coastal road they expanded their control along the Llobregat into the adjacent mountain areas, as far west as Vic and north to Urgell.³⁹

The arrival of the Carolingians may have opened up opportunities for educated young men from the northeast of Spain. One candidate is Theodulf (d. 821), who described himself as an exile 'from great misfortunes', the kind

of language that the Chronicle of 754 had used to describe the invasion. He also talked of Prudentius, the early Christian poet who came from the northeast of Spain, as 'our father'.⁴⁰ Theodulf went to the court of Charlemagne, where he used his excellent classical education to write for the Emperor in elegant Latin, which nonetheless betrayed its Visigothic traits. As bishop of Orléans and abbot of Fleury, he was patron of the now much-restored chapel at Germigny-des-Prés and its mosaic of the Ark of the Covenant.⁴¹ This was partly inspired by the mosaics in early Christian churches in Rome, especially S. Maria Maggiore, which Theodulf had visited with Charlemagne in 800, the occasion of his coronation. Theodulf had previously written a major text for Charlemagne, *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum* (*Libri Carolini*) arguing against the decision of the Byzantine Second Council of Nicaea (northwest Asia Minor) to reverse its policy of iconoclasm. If Theodulf did come from Spain, he would have been accustomed to a prevalent aniconic stance, possibly reinforced by al-Andalus.⁴² This background might explain his particular objection to the veneration of images involving candles, incense, or offerings depicting faces, when they had 'eyes that cannot see'. For Theodulf, the artist worked without spiritual inspiration, and therefore produced images that were inanimate and powerless.⁴³ Although Theodulf's text was never widely distributed, his choice of the empty Ark of the Covenant to decorate his chapel, instead of Christ, the Virgin, or narrative scenes with human figures, shows that he continued to seek meaningful but aniconic images. Another Visigoth at the court was Benedict of Aniane, formerly known

³⁸ McKitterick, 2008, 134.

³⁹ Ollich i Castanyer, 89-94, 464-466 and 84-88, 461-63.

⁴⁰ Freeman, 1992, 185.

⁴¹ Freeman, 2001, 125-39.

⁴² Elsner, 2012, 374-76.

⁴³ Freeman, 1992, 697.

as Witiza, although he seems to have been born at Maguelonne, north of the Pyrenees. He spent his life at the forefront of monastic reform under Charlemagne and his son Louis the Pious. Along with such distinguished scholars as Alcuin, he attacked the Adoptionist heresy and bishop Felix of Urgell, who had been identified as its chief proponent.

As Felix of Urgell's diocese was within Carolingian territory, the Adoptionist Controversy came to the attention of Charlemagne's court. Theological debates of this kind were of great interest to the group of scholars around Charlemagne. Beatus of Liébana's point of view suddenly received weighty support, and Adoptionism was condemned at two church councils, Regensburg (792) and Frankfurt (794).⁴⁴ What may arguably be seen as a brief and nugatory matter may nonetheless have reinforced in the minds of Frankish clergymen ideas of Spanish heresy that were to last for centuries. However, around 800, Asturias and its new king, Alfonso II (r. 791-842), had a more positive image. Charlemagne's biographer, Einhard, describes how the Emperor had so overwhelmed the king of Galicia and Asturias with his association (*societas*), that whenever he sent letters or envoys, Alfonso II ordered that he should be known as Charlemagne's own man (*proprium suum*). Although it has been pointed out recently that Einhard was using this example primarily to recall the Roman Emperor Augustus's conquest of Asturias and thereby to link Charlemagne to universal Roman rule, it suggests that the king of Asturias had some standing at the Carolingian court.⁴⁵ Alfonso II had been under pressure from Arab raids, but in 796 he took advantage of the unexpected death of Emir Hisham I to raid deep into present-day Portugal as far as Lisbon. The Royal Frankish

Annals (*Annales regni francorum*) record that ambassadors went between the courts of Alfonso II and Charlemagne in 798. The first entry says that Alfonso's envoy presented a tent of wonderful beauty (*papilionem mirae pulcritudinis*), presumably once the property of an Arab commander.⁴⁶ The second entry adds that ambassadors from Oviedo took booty from the victory at Lisbon to the Emperor, who was at Herstal in Saxony. Their gifts consisted of seven Muslim captives with as many sets of armour and mules.⁴⁷ Despite Einhard's evocation of partnership, these gifts suggest a tributary relationship between Alfonso II and Charlemagne, which may have provided the seed for twelfth-century legends of an all-conquering Charlemagne who supposedly took his army as far as Santiago de Compostela. It is uncertain what Alfonso II gained beyond the prestige of association with Charlemagne, reciprocal gifts, and perhaps recognition of his territory.

Building in Oviedo

Alfonso II may have chosen Oviedo as his seat of power because the site had been favoured by his father Fruela I, and it was the place of his birth. Aside from these symbolic considerations, Oviedo was not an obvious site to occupy, as it lacked substantial Roman or late antique buildings to reuse and did not appear in any list of Roman administrative centres. In its favour, it was a good defensive site, within reach of the old Roman city of Gijón, but behind substantial hills, and it may once have been an *oppidum*. There is good local building stone, and recent excavations carried out in 2008, near the Museo de Bellas Artes, revealed two

44 Collins, 1995a, 206-210; Bullough, 1983, 7-69.

45 Latowsky, 2005, 33-34.

46 McCormick, 2001, 474, n.11.

47 McCormick, 1986, 376; *Annales regni francorum*, 1895, 104; Defourneaux 1951, 180.

layers of *opus signinum* used in the Roman period to seal water channels. It has also been suggested that the Foncalda fountain may have an antique origin.⁴⁸ The area has yielded very few archaeological finds from the Roman period, but it remains possible that the site had some industrial use at that time linked to a small settlement or a nearby villa estate. Given the number of iron deposits across the region, a metalworking industry would make most sense, as it would have needed a managed water supply.

Chronicles attribute a group of buildings in Oviedo to the patronage of Alfonso II. The earliest of these, the Chronicle of Albelda, written from 883 either in Oviedo or in La Rioja, mentions three: a temple to the Saviour and twelve apostles, 'wonderfully built of stone and lime'; a hall to St. Mary with three altars; and a basilica of St. Tirsus founded 'with many corners'.⁴⁹ It has been asserted that the dedication to the Saviour and the twelve altars to the apostles replicated the dedication of the funerary church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, but there is no evidence that the church looked specifically to that model, which initially held relics of only SS. Andrew, Luke, and Timothy.⁵⁰ Perhaps more pertinently, Gregory of Tours recorded that Clovis, King of the Franks, and his queen, Clothild, had built a church to the Holy Apostles, where he was buried.⁵¹ Although Tirsus was a Byzantine saint, the connection was not to Constantinople but closer at hand, in Mérida, for relics associated with him had once sat underneath the principal altar of that city's cathedral. The eastern nature of Mérida's Christianity, emulated by Toledo,

continued to pervade the peninsula. Richard Fletcher noted the link and that a relic of St. James the Great was also amongst the relics under that altar, so he postulated that the relics might have been brought north some time after the invasion of 711.⁵² The preamble to an eleventh-century charter contains the earliest account of the discovery of the body of St. James at Santiago.⁵³ The language and the elements of the *inventio* are typically hagiographical.⁵⁴ Local people report a vision to Theodimir, bishop of Iria-Flavia (d. 848), who orders a three-day fast. After this they discover the tomb covered with marble stones. They turn to the king, Alfonso II, who is praised for his piety and chastity. He immediately erects a church dedicated to St. James, another nearby to St. John the Baptist, and a third with altars to the Saviour, St. Peter, and St. John the Evangelist. Again relics of all these saints appear on the inscription from Santa María at Mérida. In a charter that records the dedication of a stone church at Santiago in 899, reference was made to an earlier structure 'poorly built of rubble and clay'. As the charter is preserved only in a twelfth-century version, which may have been interpolated, it is not certain that Alfonso II ordered the rubble building.⁵⁵ If he did, it may be helpful to remember this reported level of building expertise when reading the chronicle accounts of Alfonso II's patronage in Oviedo, and before accepting the traditional identification of standing buildings with those described in the chronicles.

There is no archaeological evidence to corroborate the chronicle statements about churches in Oviedo. The chronicles' church of San Salvador could be under the present Gothic

48 Rios, 1999, 261-78.

49 Gil, 1985, XV 9.6 174-75, 248-49; Wolf, 2011, 139.

50 Constantine of Rhodes, 2012, 202-203.

51 Gregory of Tours, 1974, II.43; the church was later known as the abbey of St. Genevieve.

52 Fletcher, 1984, 60-61.

53 Plötz, 2008, 47-48; Williams, 2008a, 173.

54 Van Herwaarden, 1980, 1-35.

55 Linehan, 1993, 144-45.

cathedral, also dedicated to San Salvador, but without excavations this cannot be proven. The present church of San Tirso was destroyed in 1513, but restoration in the early twentieth century found vestiges of an east-end wall.⁵⁶ The current east wall and its window are often believed to be part of Alfonso II's church, but it is at best a major reconstruction. The three-light window of brick arches resting on stone capitals and columns, all contained within an *alfiz* (frame), is unlikely to come from an early ninth-century building, as the *alfiz* is an Islamic architectural feature that was brought north no earlier than the late ninth-century. The first documentary reference to St. Tirsus is from 896, when Alfonso III and Jimena were specific in giving their 'chapel' of St. Tirsus to the cathedral of Oviedo.⁵⁷ The church of Santa María still stood in the sixteenth century, as the antiquarian Ambrosio de Morales saw it. If his description of a rectangular building with a triple nave and an arcade similar to that found at the church of Bamba, near Valladolid, is correct, Morales's church of Santa María was either a different building or the earlier church had a substantial renovation in the tenth century.⁵⁸ In the more elaborate version of the Chronicle of Alfonso III (*Ovetense* or *Ad Sebastianum*), the description of Santa María includes an additional hall at the west end that functions as a royal pantheon.⁵⁹ However, as this version of the Chronicle survives only in a sixteenth-century manuscript, the information is unreliable, especially because a pantheon at the west end is a feature that is more familiar from the late eleventh century. The author of the Chronicle of Albelda (c. 900) confidently describes the decoration of the

three Oviedan churches. He says that Alfonso II decorated all the houses of the Lord with arches and marble columns, gold and silver, and that he 'likewise decorated with them with diverse royal palace pictures'.⁶⁰ No marble columns have been found in Oviedo, and many churches in Asturias have arcades supported on square pillars, perhaps because few Roman columns were available locally. But in Gijón and in nearby Roman villas there were wall paintings with fictive architectural features. If Alfonso II built churches in Oviedo, they were probably modest in scale and material, as at Santiago, and most likely relied on paint for ornament. The details of the chronicle's description, as I shall argue, may have more to do with church decoration carried out in the chronicler's own time.

The author's reference to gold and silver is particularly surprising in view of Alfonso II's gifts to Charlemagne, which consisted of captured Muslim soldiers and their accoutrements and make no mention of any gold or silver. There is little indication that Asturias was wealthy at this period. Only one piece of metalwork from the reign of Alfonso II attests to some degree of prosperity. Known as the 'Cross of Angels', this exceptional Greek cross was crafted in wild cherry wood covered in gold foil and studded with gems, pearls and, on the reverse, a Roman cameo. The cross was damaged in 1934 when a bomb destroyed the Cámara Santa, the chamber that still holds it, and again when it was stolen in 1977. It is now problematically restored, and even more obscured by the weight of ideology that has been placed on it.⁶¹ Originally it held small relics in carved chambers, and other jewels (*perpendulia*) hung from its arms. In these features it

56 Collins, 1989, 9; Dodds, 1990, 33, pl.18, 137, n.41.

57 García Larragueta, 1962, no.16, 58-59.

58 Collins, 1989, 7-10.

59 Carrero, 2007, 375-89 and Cayrol, 2013, 53-66.

60 Dodds, 1990, 30.

61 AMS, cat. no. 72, 146-48; Arbeiter, 2009, 401-16; Schlunk, 1950, 93-99.

recalled Byzantine crosses and North Italian examples, especially the Desiderius Cross from Brescia (c. 757-774). An inscription formed by individual letters soldered onto the reverse states that Alfonso, 'humble servant of Christ' presented it in 808. The cross emphasises its Byzantine pretensions by adapting the phrase, 'In this sign conquer', which, according to the early Christian chronicler, Eusebius, appeared in a dream to Emperor Constantine before the battle at Milvian bridge.⁶² The designation of Alfonso II as 'humble servant of Christ' is unusual amongst kings of Asturias, but was used by Byzantine emperors including Theophilos, Alfonso II's contemporary.⁶³ Helmut Schlunk, who studied the technical aspects of the cross most closely before it was damaged, believed that the workmanship was foreign. He saw several of the techniques as Byzantine: the stringing of the pearls, the quality of the box settings, and the way in which the fixings of the gold foil on the reverse are disguised. It most likely arrived as a diplomatic gift, perhaps from Charlemagne in response to Alfonso II's gifts from Lisbon. Its function is also uncertain, as it lacks both loops for hanging and any fixing for a staff to carry it in procession. By the early twelfth century it had been mythologised not only as an altar cross, but also as an *acheir-opoieton*, an object made not by human hands, but by two angels in the form of travellers.⁶⁴ There is scant evidence that Alfonso II owned large amounts of other treasure. A twelfth-century document that purports to be his will of 812 lists only a modest number of silver liturgical vessels.⁶⁵ This raises the question of the Cámara Santa, the structure that is now attached to the south transept of the cathedral

and traditionally assigned to Alfonso II, but not mentioned in any of the chronicles. If it was built as a treasury, as is often asserted, it is perplexing, because Alfonso II does not seem to have owned more treasure than would fit in a chest. It is probably a later construction.

The account of the three churches in the Chronicle of Albelda is followed by an influential and problematic statement: '[Alfonso II] ordered everything in Oviedo according to the Gothic arrangement, just as it had been in Toledo, as much in the church as in the palace'.⁶⁶ This has been understood to say that Alfonso II's buildings aimed to recreate those in Toledo, but there is nothing here to suggest that this refers to art and architecture. The chronicler is concerned throughout to link his king, Alfonso III (r. 866-910), to a universal history that stretches back to Adam via the earlier Asturian kings called Alfonso and via the Goths. Many of the achievements of Alfonso III are projected back onto his precursors, for example, victories over the 'Ishmaelites', that is the Arabs. All this accords with a mentality that saw the world interconnected by a series of types and antitypes. It was integral to interpretations of the Bible where, for example, the Sacrifice of Abraham prefigured the Crucifixion of Christ. Viewed as history the statements are confusing, but as literary and rhetorical evocations they make a different kind of sense. The earlier kings called Alfonso provide a rich imaginary backdrop for the otherwise unexpected successes of the reign of Alfonso III.

As Roger Collins has noted, at some point between the composition of the Chronicle of Albelda from 883 and the *Rotense* version of the Chronicle of Alfonso III (c. 913-924), a new monument is added to the list along with a royal palace, baths, and storehouses. This is another church dedicated to Byzantine saints, SS. Julian

62 Henriët, 2005, 164-72; AMS, cat. no. 75, 150-51.

63 Powell, 1985, 14.

64 Alonso, 2010, 25-30; *Historia Silense*, 1959, 139-40.

65 Floriano, 1951, no. 24, 118-40.

66 Dodds, 1990, 30.

and Basilissa. The former had figured on the seventh-century Mérida inscription along with St. James. The *Rotense* says that the church was some distance from the palace and that it had 'a pair of altars of wonderful workmanship set up in a marvellous arrangement'.⁶⁷ A pair of altars, as opposed to a single altar or three altars, is unusual, and Collins may be right in suggesting that they would have functioned best in a double-apsed church. Such a church could be imagined, if we did not have a standing church dedicated to St. Julian, San Julian de los Prados, otherwise known as Santullano, a large basilica with three altars at the east end. This is the largest of the pre-Romanesque churches of Asturias and decorated with a sophisticated aniconic programme of much-restored wall paintings. This programme comprises fictive architectural ornament that creates the illusion of fluted columns, pilasters, marble panelling, a modillion frieze, and coffered ceilings, perhaps familiar from Roman wall painting and mosaic decoration.⁶⁸ The ceiling of the main chapel has more freeform decoration with alternating discs and quatrefoils against a dark blue background. Foliate scrolls issue from vases on the intrados, the underside, of the arches, and a decorative frieze with micro-architectural panels and *trompe l'oeil* curtains runs above the arches. There is only one symbol, a Latin *crux gemmata*, sometimes known as a 'Cross of Golgotha', whose arms have flared and indented terminations, whilst alpha and omega letters hang from the lateral arms. The whole is framed by a semi-circular arch and flanked by two miniature palaces. Documentary, stylistic, and iconographic arguments have been presented to place the paintings, and thus the building, in the reign of Alfonso II. None of them are conclusive. The documentary case is

weak because the church is not mentioned in the earliest chronicle, the Chronicle of Albelda, nor at any point in any document together with any reference to painting. The Chronicle of Albelda mentions 'diverse paintings' and in the same phrase 'royal palaces', but it is far from clear what the author is describing, whether these are paintings of royal palaces or paintings of a type found in royal palaces. The stylistic argument used by Jerrilynn Dodds to date the paintings to the reign of Alfonso II relies on parallels with a fictive Corinthian capital at Saint Germain d'Auxerre (841-859) and other capitals and *trompe l'oeil* buildings in the Gospel of Saint Médard of Soissons of Louis the Pious (before 827).⁶⁹ The Carolingian examples derive, however, from the same antique and Byzantine repertoire that is to be found over a longer period from Constantinople to Damascus, to Rome, to Ravenna and, although survivals are rare, in Spain, Portugal, and France. What is distinctive is the aniconic nature of the programme at San Julian de los Prados, whereas the Carolingian examples occur within figurative contexts. Dodds uses this characteristic as another dating argument, and locates the paintings within the second period of iconoclasm in Byzantium, 814 to 843, which falls squarely within the reign of Alfonso II.⁷⁰ Yet there is no evidence that Asturias was complying with contemporary Byzantine strictures and not merely continuing its own tendency to avoid figurative images. The embassy that Emperor Theophilos sent to Córdoba in 839-840 serves only to emphasise the extent of the misunderstanding between the two powers.⁷¹ Many of the motifs in the paintings at Santullano derive from Roman wall paintings that can be found in the northwest of Spain

67 Collins, 1989, 11.

68 Arias, 1999, 58-94; Guardia, 2008b, 270.

69 Dodds, 1990, 39, pl. 30 and 31.

70 Dodds, 1990, 37-46.

71 Manzano, 1998, 215-227.

at Astorga, Lugo, and Gijón or from mosaics.⁷² But the deployment of miniature palaces above the arches and the form of the cross may be explicit quotations of Byzantine precedents, specifically mosaic decoration from Ravenna. Most importantly perhaps, as Collins has noted, it is Alfonso III whose name is associated with this form of cross and not Alfonso II.⁷³ Alfonso II is linked to the Greek cross, which remained the preferred form in manuscript illumination of the tenth century, but Alfonso III donated a Latin cross with flared terminations. I shall return to San Julian de los Prados to show how it may be better understood within the art and ideology of the reign of Alfonso III.

Travelling Across the Peninsula

A survey of artistic and political activity across the rest of the peninsula in the first half of the ninth century shows that Asturias was only a small kingdom in a land that was experiencing power struggles on a large scale between the Carolingians and the Umayyads, and at a regional level between a number of other families and potential leaders. In the later years of Alfonso II's reign he gave shelter to a man called Mahmud, a *muwallad* or Christian convert to Islam, who was an exile from Mérida, because he had rebelled against the emir of Córdoba, 'Abd al-Rahmān I.⁷⁴ After seven years Mahmud challenged Alfonso II's position, but the king defeated him, according to the Chronicle of Alfonso III, together with the Muslims who had come to help him.⁷⁵ The complex relations between Christians and Muslims in the

mid-ninth century were not always determined by religious adherence. Maps often depict a peninsula with defined boundaries that imply areas separated by religion and even by a large empty buffer zone around the river Duero. However, current scholarship has cast doubt on the deserted nature of that area, which may have been regarded as empty only because people who lived there did not fall within the administrative systems of any governed region. Diplomatic missions could certainly cross it, and in 847 an envoy from Córdoba went as far as Reims, perhaps to ensure that the Carolingian King Charles the Bald (r. 843-877) did not respond to the approaches of the rebel *muwallad* Mūsa ibn Mūsa of the Banū Qāsi, whose territory centred on Tudela, Huesca, and Zaragoza, along the river Ebro. The following year Córdoba worked with Charles's nephew, Pippin, count of Gascony, to incite a rebellion against the count of Barcelona. Around the same time (c. 848-850), another traveller, a priest called Eulogius, went between the south and north carrying books. He justified his journey by claiming that he was trying to find his two brothers who were in exile in Bavaria. As Janet Nelson has noted, these exploits smell of politics.⁷⁶ Eulogius says that he never reached his brothers because of fighting around the passes over the Pyrenees, but that may have been an excuse enabling him to visit a group of monasteries in and around Pamplona. The Christian ruler of Pamplona, Íñigo Arista, was allied with the Banū Qāsi, and had given his granddaughter in marriage to Mūsa ibn Mūsa.⁷⁷ Eulogius may even have been sent to test the support for a potential revolt in Córdoba itself. His friend Paul Alvarus ascribed to him only a successful cultural mission, an influx of texts that stimulated a revival of Latin

72 Marín, 1992, 181-85 and 509-12; Guardia, 2008b, 265-81.

73 Collins, 1989, 12.

74 Wolf, 2011, 140.

75 Collins, 2012, 39-40.

76 Nelson, 1993, 73.

77 Collins, 1995a, 188-89; Barton, 2011, 7.

poetry composition in Córdoba.⁷⁸ One of the monasteries Eulogius visited was the Navarrese Leire, north of Tudela, where he read a 'History of Muhammad', known now to be a false and blasphemous *Vita* of the prophet Muhammad.⁷⁹ The Pamplonan monasteries may have had rich libraries, as Eulogius was able to return home with copies of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Satires* of Juvenal and the poetry of Horace, as well as some early Christian texts. He may even have been using a map, a copy of the antique Itinerary of Antoninus (*itinerarium provinciarum Antonini Augusti*), and followed the old Roman road back to Córdoba via Zaragoza, Sigüenza, and Alcalá de Henares.⁸⁰ This exchange of books was not an isolated event, and Díaz y Díaz showed that manuscripts also travelled in the other direction, from the south to the north, especially from Toledo.⁸¹ It might be expected that the fluid northern Catalan territories, which were nominally ruled by a succession of Frankish counts at this period, might display notable differences in administration and in artistic production.⁸² However, Jonathan Jarrett has looked at charter evidence for Carolingian imports and found a permissive approach that allowed a local diplomatic identity to develop, not one controlled by the Carolingian administration.⁸³ Roger Collins has demonstrated that Christians in both the west and east of the peninsula were using and adapting the Law of the Visigoths (*Lex Visigothorum*) throughout the ninth century, perhaps because it was highly effective. Likewise, northern Catalonia provides almost no physical evidence of new building at this period. There are documentary

references, but little remains to confirm that the churches mentioned were new buildings, and if so, what building methods were used. A European project to catalogue all religious architecture in Catalonia, Aragón, and the Balearic Islands between the fourth and tenth centuries has 850 documentary or archaeological records, but few of those buildings are securely identified or dated.⁸⁴ In 840 Count Sunifred of Cerdanya-Urgell mentions the repair of a cathedral in Urgell dedicated to St. Mary, which had been 'destroyed by infidels in the distant past' (*antiquitus*).⁸⁵ Barcelona's cathedral was either rebuilt or restored around 877 by Bishop Frodoí.⁸⁶ In Vic, in 888, three churches were consecrated to St. Peter, St. Michael, and St. Mary by the river, but in the upper town the Montcada family were using the old Roman temple as the core of their 'castle'. In short, there is insufficient evidence to support the idea that Carolingian masons and artists worked in the peninsula.⁸⁷

Defensive Building in al-Andalus

The Arabs and Berbers had been building fortifications and fortified cities from the eighth century, to protect the Upper March (*thagr al-aqsa*) centred on Zaragoza on the river Ebro, and the Middle March (*thagr al-awsat*) defined by Toledo and the river Tagus.⁸⁸ The extent to which they built vigilance towers or perhaps signal towers, especially those in Catalonia, is controversial, as traditionally they have been

78 Díaz y Díaz, 1969a, 222-23.

79 Constable, 1997, 48-50; Christys, 2002, 62-64.

80 Christys, 2002, 57-59.

81 Díaz y Díaz, 1969b, 384-92.

82 Collins, 1985, 489-512.

83 Jarrett, 2013, 89-126.

84 Ripoll, 2009b, 229-42.

85 Baraut, 1999, 456.

86 Beltrán de Heredia, 1999, 469-71.

87 Carbonell Esteller, 2012, 391-413; for an alternative view see Bango, 1992a, 303-13.

88 Zozaya, 1991, 55-74; for Catalan examples, see essays in Giráldez, 2013.

regarded as Roman.⁸⁹ Many Islamic fortifications were located along the old Roman roads and at river crossings throughout the peninsula, as these were strategic sites. For pragmatic reasons, Roman or late antique masonry, or even foundations, were often reused. A standing example is a tower on a high point at Uxama on the river Duero. Some of these routes were important for trade and Zaragoza was a major centre for the meeting of merchants from Francia.⁹⁰ Amongst other goods, this trade involved slaves, in a network that probably stretched from northern Europe, through al-Andalus, and into North Africa.⁹¹ The evidence is scant but Louis the Pious granted privileged tax status to Abraham, a Jewish merchant based in Zaragoza, who was licensed to trade foreign slaves in the Frankish kingdom.⁹² The largest of the surviving fortresses from this period is the Alcazaba (fig. 46) at Mérida (132m x 137m). Located on the main north-south artery, the *Via de la Plata*, this fortress was constructed under 'Abd al-Rahmān II in 835 and 848/51.⁹³ It guarded the old Roman bridge across the river Guadiana and helped to subdue constant internal unrest. The large square fortress was constructed almost entirely of reused ashlar masonry including column shafts. The interior was mostly destroyed except for the large cistern (*aljibe*) that was reconstructed in the eighteenth century, its vaulted entranceway, and ruins of the small oratory that once stood above it.⁹⁴ The entrance block that links the fortress to the all-important bridge and several of its massive defensive walls still stands. Two inscriptions marked the foundation,

89 García Merino, 1998; Martí, 2008 and Martí, 2013, 11-35.

90 McCormick, 2001, 674-78.

91 Gaiser, 2013, 41-70.

92 Roth, 1994, 153-54; McCormick, 2001, 675.

93 Feijoo, 2005, 565-69.

94 Feijoo, 2005, 570-81.

Figure 46 Mérida, Alcazaba, Entrance



one carved on a piece of Roman marble cornice over the entrance (835), the second on a lintel or piece of architrave inside the fortress.⁹⁵ They are the earliest surviving inscriptions from secular buildings in al-Andalus. The words are formulaic, in accordance with Arab diplomatic practice, and state that the fortress is to be a refuge for those who are obedient to Emir 'Abd al-Rahmān II (r. 822-852). Thus these inscriptions emphasise that this imposing defensive structure was directed towards the rebels in the region, often converted Christians known as *muwallads*. Not so very far in the past the rebellious *muwallads* had been encouraged by a letter from the Carolingian King Louis the Pious with a promise of military support from the

95 Barcelo, 2004, 59-78.

northeast.⁹⁶ This potentially powerful alliance did not materialise. Instead, 'Abd al-Rahmān II used building to establish his control across the peninsula, for example, on the southeast coast where his governor may have built the town of Murcia over Roman foundations in an effort to control disturbances between Yemeni and Qaysi settlers.⁹⁷ At Zaragoza he repaired the bridge over the river Ebro, and in Toledo he renovated the fortress overlooking the river Tagus. In addition to these military structures he built numerous mosques including one at Seville, now lost. He also sent money and builders to 'Abd Allah b. Marwān al-Jillīqī, the rebel who had been expelled from Mérida, but who then founded and fortified the city of Badajoz under the authority of the emir. The first building was the main mosque built in brick and mudbrick, except for a stone minaret, followed by a private mosque within the fortress and public baths by the entrance to the city.

Church Building in the Early Ninth Century?

It is within this context of Andalusī architectural projects and the expertise they required that some scholars place otherwise problematic Christian buildings, notably Santa Lucía del Trampal and a group of churches south of Burgos (Castile) and Logroño (La Rioja), as well as San Román de Tobillas (Álava) in the Basque country.⁹⁸ Given the idiosyncratic nature of Trampal and its proximity to Mérida, it could belong to the ninth century. 'Abd al-Rahmān II may have encouraged Christians to leave the city in the same way he moved Ibn

Marwān to Badajoz. As restored, the east end of the church remains roughly built, mostly of large ashlar blocks that also act as quoins to retain the rubble parts of other walls. None of the present stone vaulting is integrated into the walls, so earlier wooden roofs remain a possibility.⁹⁹ To this extent Trampal fits with eighth-century building in Mérida. The interior of the transept with its row of horseshoe arches, supported on attached shafts and capitals, and its cimborium, is a more finely crafted space, which is less believable at that early date. It would seem to fit better in the tenth century, but Caballero has argued that the site was abandoned between the end of the eighth century and a reoccupation that saw the rebuilding of the nave in the thirteenth century.¹⁰⁰

Although recent scholarship has questioned the assignment of Asturian churches to the reign of Alfonso II (r. 791-842), some experts have attributed other stone-built churches, with domes on pendentives, to the first half of the ninth century.¹⁰¹ The dating is based on the key monument of San Román de Tobillas, which exceptionally has documentary and epigraphic evidence, as well as recent excavations and stratigraphic analysis. As the written evidence gives two dates, 822 and 939, and the physical evidence two clear early medieval phases, it is thought to be irrefutable that the first phase belongs to the first documented date and the second likewise. In a will of 822, preserved in the thirteenth-century cartulary of Oña, an Abbot Avitus promised to give Tobillas 100 cows, 80 mares, 20 stallions or mules, and 500 sheep, salt beds, 24 books, and an *atrio*.¹⁰² The word *atrio* has been taken to denote the church building, but it was also used in other ways

96 Nelson, 1993, 76-77.

97 Kennedy, 2006, 58-59.

98 Azkarate 1995, 189-214; Sánchez Zufiaurre, 2007; Sánchez Zufiaurre, 2009, 231-39.

99 Utrero, 2006a, 578.

100 Caballero, 1999b.

101 Azkarate, 1995, 189-214.

102 Alamo, 1950, no. 1, 1-3.

during the early Middle Ages and could refer to a house, including one where clergy could live or a precinct with diverse functions including sometimes burials. San Román was built in a pre-existing village, which had a late antique origin. It is possible that Avitus was leaving the monastery his house as a residence for the new abbot or for the monks, or his gift could have been an enclosed piece of land for monastic or funerary purposes. Ecclesiastical organization and monasticism does not appear to have been very developed in Álava during the ninth century, and the first mention of a 'Count' in Álava occurs only in 882.¹⁰³ Further east around Pamplona, the region was far from peaceful, as local landowners opposed incursions by troops who had the support of the Frankish king Louis the Pious. According to Einhard, in 824 the Franks were ambushed and one of their number, Aebulus, was captured and sent to the emir in Córdoba as a diplomatic gift.¹⁰⁴ The complexities of this skirmishing are highlighted by the contrary fate of his companion, Aznar, who was released as he was 'a relative of his captors'. Church building this close to an active frontier may not be impossible, but it seems improbable. In my opinion, it is more likely that the first archaeological phase of San Román de Tobillas belongs to 939, so I shall refer to this group of churches again in the next chapter, whilst acknowledging that the current consensus is that they should be viewed in this mid-ninth century milieu.

Christians and the Enlarged Great Mosque of Córdoba

Alongside the emir's increasing architectural hold on the peninsula, the mid-ninth century

experienced a rise in the Muslim population in Córdoba and consequent pressure on the identity of the Christian community. The Christians and the Jews in al-Andalus lived under a system called *dhimma*, which was inspired by the teaching of the Qur'ān and a set of rules devised in Damascus in the early eighth century.¹⁰⁵ Provided the non-Muslim communities paid a tax, the *jizya*, they were to be allowed to live a separate life and were not to be persecuted. The original rules were devised to prevent intermarriage, particularly between Christian men and Muslim women, as well as conversion and other forms of social contact that could threaten to dilute the elite minority at the centre of the Islamic empire. They also prohibited the outward expression of Judaism or Christianity, bell ringing, chanting, and processions as well as imposing items of dress that would identify non-Muslims, who were not to be allowed to adopt the arms, seals, dress, or even hair styles of the Arabs. Neither churches nor synagogues were to be built or repaired. It is doubtful if these rules were ever enforced in al-Andalus, and the Christian accounts of life in Córdoba in the ninth century suggest that churches were built, bells rung, and that the streets saw enough processions to provoke tension. By the ninth century, although the Arab and Berber population was still a minority, the rate of conversion to Islam was causing anxiety in both the Christian and Muslim communities.¹⁰⁶ The Christians felt under threat and in danger of losing their cultural identity, whilst the Muslims were concerned that the influx of new converts might undermine the ritual purity of their devotions.¹⁰⁷ In this highly charged atmosphere apocalyptic texts were as

¹⁰³ Collins, 1990, 156.

¹⁰⁴ Collins, 1990, 128; Collins, 2012, 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Wolf, 1988, 9-12.

¹⁰⁶ Fletcher, 1992, 35-41; Glick, 1979, 188-91; for the process Bulliet, 1990, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Safran, 2001, 576-577.

popular in Córdoba as they were in Asturias. The much-quoted Christian text from Paul Alvarus's *Indiculus luminosus*, which portrayed the prophet Muhammad as a type of Antichrist, encapsulates his frustration:

Christian youths, handsome in appearance, fluent of tongue, conscious of their dress and action, distinguished for their knowledge of gentile lore, highly regarded for their ability to speak Arabic, do they not all eagerly use the volumes of the Chaldeans ... while they are ignorant of the beauty of the Church and look with disgust upon the Church's rivers of paradise as vile? Alas! Christians do not know their own law, and Latins do not use their own tongue ...¹⁰⁸

Although Latin and Hebrew remained liturgical languages, from the ninth century most daily business seems to have been conducted in Arabic and not in Romance or Late Latin.¹⁰⁹ The court of al-Andalus relied on members of the Christian and Jewish elites not only for management of their communities but also often for royal administration and sometimes even foreign diplomacy. Much of the pressure on the Christians was cultural, and this intensified when new music, foods, fashions, grooming, etiquette, and textiles from Baghdad transformed everyday life in Córdoba during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahmān II.¹¹⁰ Perhaps in order to make sense of such an avalanche of colour and luxury, later Arabic historians attributed it to one figure, nicknamed Ziryab ('Ali Ibn Nafi', d. 857), an exceptional musician and a freedman of the 'Abbāsid Caliph.¹¹¹ His enforced departure

from Baghdad and arrival in Córdoba via North Africa, or even his historical existence, remain unsubstantiated, but cultural developments in the East do seem to have affected Aghlabid Qayrawan and Umayyad Córdoba in the middle of the ninth century. It may also be significant that intellectual Jewish communities, involved with study of the Talmud, formed another network between Baghdad, Qayrawan, and Córdoba in this period.¹¹²

The rate of conversion to Islam and the commensurate enlargement of the Great Mosque in Córdoba between 833 and 852 may have helped to inflame the perception of Muslim dominance amongst the Christian community.¹¹³ The extension constituted eight additional bays in the direction of the qibla and, as far as possible, it replicated the earlier bays, giving an almost biological sense of growth (fig. 47). The mihrab had to be moved in 848, and in the process it was enlarged into a small chamber. Two exceptional Roman white marble fluted columns divided into five sections by four horizontal rings were placed in front of the mihrab. Four shorter reused columns of pink and green marble, with Corinthian capitals and Attic bases, which flank the surviving tenth-century mihrab, probably once articulated the mihrab of 'Abd al-Rahmān II. This arrangement was to be very influential in North Africa and in the north of Spain.¹¹⁴ Despite the influx of new fashions in the secular world, the interior of the mosque remained close to the Umayyad conception of classical art, and where possible obtained *spolia* to delineate its most important spaces. As Córdoba could no longer supply the quantity of *spolia* used in the first building, some capitals were also carved for the project (*ex profeso*). The results are such proficient

108 Williams, 1992, 229-30; Colbert, 1962; Dodds, 1990, 66.

109 Wright, 2012a, 99-108.

110 Holod, 1992, 199, 42.

111 Wright, 1992, 556-59; Reynolds, 2008, 155-68.

112 Fishman, 2011, 65-67.

113 Glick, 1995, 51-60; Bulliet, 1979; Coope, 1995, 23-30.

114 Fernández-Puertas, 2009, 108-113 and 326-28.

Figure 47 Cordoba, arcade of the Great Mosque, second phase



copies of Roman pieces that only the occasional inscription in Arabic gives away their origin. In 855 the new emir, Muhammad I (r. 852-886), substantially restored the west door of the Mosque, the Bāb al-Wazarā, now known as the door of St. Stephen (fig. 48). Above the door a moulded rectangular *alfiz* frame encloses a tympanum in the form of a large horseshoe arch; it has alternating false voussoirs of plain brick and stucco relief with foliate decoration. Three smaller blind horseshoe arches articulate the upper section of the wall above the door and, above them, a row of roll corbels support a cornice, which in turn formed a ledge for stepped merlons.¹¹⁵ The elements of this design were to be influential in al-Andalus and in the north of the peninsula. Faced with this overwhelming cultural behemoth, some Christians took a stand that was

¹¹⁵ Dodds, 1992, 15-16.

Figure 48 Bāb al-Wazarā (Door of St. Stephen). Image courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art



to end in martyrdom. As Janet Nelson has pointed out, this happened soon after Eulogius returned from his visit to Pamplona, so it may not have been as spontaneous as has often been assumed.¹¹⁶ A great deal has been written about these events, at the time by Paul Alvarus and Eulogius and even more over the recent decades, perhaps because the ninth-century writing evokes the same mix of desperation and intimidation demonstrated by modern-day terrorists.¹¹⁷ The one *dhimma* rule that could not be broken with impunity was blasphemy, and it was to that crime that the would-be martyrs turned. Tried under the arches of the Great Mosque between 851 and 859, over 40 Christians pushed the Muslim authorities to

¹¹⁶ Nelson, 1993, 72-73.

¹¹⁷ Coope, 1995, 23-30.

the point where they had little alternative but to convict and execute them.¹¹⁸ The Córdoba martyrdoms did not gain momentum, and by the tenth century there were only isolated instances. Nor did the martyrs receive extensive long-term recognition in the peninsula, and where they were mentioned in the liturgy it may be because thirty of them were included in the highly influential martyrology (c. 858-859) of the Frankish monk Usuard, from Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris.¹¹⁹ Usuard dedicated this comprehensive book of martyrs to his king, Charles the Bald, who may have also commissioned the work. Possession of relics, especially those of martyrs, had a political dimension and could be used to endorse a ruler and even a dynasty.¹²⁰ Being well aware of the power of piety, Charles the Bald sent Usuard and other aristocratic priests to the frontiers of his empire on a mission to collect relics that would mirror his territorial aspirations. Relics had to come with labels and plausible provenances, without which they were merely pieces of bone, tissue, or fibre. Having been unsuccessful in a search for the body of St. Vincent in Valencia or Zaragoza, Usuard and his companion joined a group of travellers going to Córdoba where they acquired the relics of three recent martyrs, George, Aurelius, and Natalie.¹²¹ The local bishop authenticated, parcelled and sealed them, and addressed the packet to King Charles.¹²²

Ramiro I and the Vikings

After the death of Alfonso II in 842, the next two Asturian kings produced some remarkable buildings out of apparent isolation. Ramiro I (r. 842-850) became king of Asturias at the age of 52. He was roughly 'Abd al-Rahmān II's contemporary, but had had to wait for his chance to rule, and only achieved the throne with the help of his Galician supporters around Lugo.¹²³ Reports of his short eight-year reign were dominated by his defeat of a Viking raid in 844 and some remarkable architectural patronage. The two may not have been unconnected. The Chronicle of Alfonso III records that 'Northmen, a pagan and extremely cruel people previously unknown to us, arrived in our region with their naval forces'.¹²⁴ Ramiro is said to have destroyed many bands of them and burned their ships, but some escaped and went to al-Andalus (Baetica). The Arabic sources are highly problematic and the southern raids of 844 may be confused with others launched against Seville, Lisbon, and Nakūr on the North African coast between 859 and 861.¹²⁵ The earlier attacks were repelled by 'Abd al-Rahmān II, assisted by the son of the Rustumid imam, Muhammad.¹²⁶ He had come from his father's Berber kingdom, based in modern Algeria, to the Cordoban court in 822, and stayed to gain experience in the chancellery and the vizierate as well as acting as governor of Toledo in 828. According to the c. 1300 historian, Ibn Idhārī, 'Abd al-Rahmān II sent envoys to the Rustamid

118 Wolf, 1988, 107-19.

119 Nelson, 1993, 67-80.

120 Freeman, 2011, Chapter 8.

121 Christys, 2002, 54.

122 Nelson, 1993, 74; Gil, 1973, 416-30.

123 Portass, 2013, 283-306.

124 Wolf, 2011, 141.

125 Dozy, 1987, for 844 raids, 13-27; for further raids in 858 to 861, 29-38; for an English translation of the Arab viewpoint recorded by Ibn Hayyān, see Ibn Fadlān, 2012, 105-109. For a critique of the sources, see Christys, 2015, 29-64.

126 Gaiser, 2013, 17.

imam in North Africa to announce news of the victory against the Vikings.¹²⁷ The Galicians' resistance to the Vikings, 'by throwing missiles', is confirmed by the contemporary *Annals of St. Bertin*, which say that the Vikings had previously been up the river Garonne as far as Toulouse.¹²⁸ Ramiro I was still celebrated as a great warrior in the twelfth century, but by that time the battle had been reinvented both in time, place, and nature. It was moved to Clavijo, in La Rioja, and to the year 834 before Ramiro came to the throne; the enemies had become Muslims from Córdoba and the victory was thanks to St. James who appeared on the battlefield on a white horse.

One standing building represents Ramiro I's architectural patronage, the belvedere on the slopes of Monte Naranco, just outside Oviedo (fig. 49). Monte Naranco has a commanding view of the city and of the surrounding countryside, which may have been enjoyed from an earlier Roman villa, but was certainly exploited by Ramiro to its full extent.¹²⁹ The scale and technical virtuosity of the buildings on Monte Naranco dwarfed the efforts of Ramiro's predecessors to such an extent that they continued to be celebrated and detailed in chronicles.¹³⁰ The *Chronicle of Albelda* says that he built a church and palaces with wonderfully crafted vaulting, and the *Chronicle of Alfonso III (Rotense)* confirms this in its reference to 'many arched buildings of granite and marble'. The phrase that the *Chronicle* used for the stone construction, '*ex murice*', implies a purple tint, and the word may have been very carefully chosen as the building stone, mainly sandstone

¹²⁷ Gaiser, 2013, 54-55.

¹²⁸ *Annals of St.-Bertin*, 1991, 60; Sánchez Pardo, 2010b, 57-86.

¹²⁹ González y Fernández Vallés, 1962, 73-89.

¹³⁰ For the exceptional nature of such vaulting in the early Middle Ages, see Stalley, 1999, 130.

Figure 49 Oviedo, Monte Naranco, belvedere



from Piedramuelle, has a pinkish iron oxide in some layers.¹³¹ It is unclear whether the stone was quarried specifically for this building or reused. The *Chronicle* emphasises that no wood was used in the buildings, which may suggest that wood had been the standard material even for royal buildings in the past.

The belvedere, or palace of Ramiro, is unique amongst surviving buildings, its form and ornament eclectic but also innovative. It is a two-storey structure, of which the upper level is a barrel-vaulted hall, divided into three sections, with a loggia at either end, whilst the semi-basement lower level is also vaulted with transverse arches (fig. 50). A double staircase leads to the upper level on the sheltered side of the building. Pilaster buttresses articulate

¹³¹ Gil, 1985, 57.

Figure 50 Oviedo, Monte Naranco, belvedere, semi-basement

the exterior of the sides of the building, incised to recall classical fluted pilasters (fig. 51). A triple-arched loggia dominates each end of the building. The totality of this façade design recalls a triumphal arch, like that of Constantine, although such ideas had long been absorbed into ecclesiastical settings. The masonry of these facades is notably finer than that of the lower storey and the sides. The triple arches rest on false columns carved with a spiral cable motif and crowned by Corinthian capitals, whose thick flat acanthus leaves have incised leaf veins and drilled leaf curls. Contemporary parallels for such carving come from Islamic contexts, including North Africa, which in turn had late antique precedents.¹³² Spiral columns carved within some of the pilaster-columns from Mérida provide examples closer to home.

Fluted pilasters and round medallions (*clipei*) in the spandrels at Naranco recall Roman triumphal arches, although sculpture on the façade is otherwise limited to a small Greek cross in relief, from which hang pendant alpha and omega letters, and another panel depicting what may be crossed spears. Three smaller arches above the main loggia mirror those below; this is not a feature of Roman triumphal arches, but perhaps shows awareness of the Bāb al-Wazarā at Córdoba that features three smaller blind arches above the doorway. The decoration of the upper hall is even more elaborate. The walls are articulated by arcades, or blind arcades, on all four sides, supported on blocks carved to resemble paired engaged columns with spiral cable motif. The necking and the faces of the angle-ridge capitals are likewise delineated by cable motif. These distinctive triangular divisions do not have obvious

¹³² Torres Balbás, 1956, 147–72.

Figure 51 Oviedo, Monte Naranco, belvedere, north façade

precedents in the peninsula, but derive from a Byzantine approach to decorating the faces of capitals employed in San Vitale (Ravenna) and in North Africa. The closest parallels are found again in mosques at Sedrata (Algeria) and in Qayrawan (Tunisia).¹³³ These comparisons could seem far-fetched, except that it is possible to envisage some diplomatic contact between North Africa and Oviedo via 'Abd al-Rahmān II and the Rustumid Muhammad in the context of their common foe. The surfaces formed by the triangular divisions are mostly carved with figurative decoration, small human figures, or pairs of animals. Paired horsemen accompanied by figures carrying boxes on their heads fill the relief panels at the bases of the transverse arches (fig. 52). Large medallions in the spandrels of the arcades have especially

fine and varied zoomorphic carving. Animals tangled in foliate tendrils predominate, but there are also affronted birds, and a reindeer. The medallions have been compared to Islamic textiles, and the foliate borders certainly recall such designs. Similar borders combined with animal designs are also common on gold bracteates, and the stylised animals of the Naranco medallions, in particular, may relate to Scandinavian designs.¹³⁴ Bracteates had been a way of carrying wealth since Roman times, and they were often regarded as amulets. Schlunk dismissed them as potential models for Naranco, because none were found in the peninsula, but *ex silencio* arguments that relate to metalwork are often weak as so much metalwork was melted down and recycled. These bracteates could also have been isolated introductions,

¹³³ Deliyannis, 2010, 232-34; Marçais, 1954, 42-59.

¹³⁴ Nees, 2002, 104, fig. 61.

Figure 52 Oviedo, Monte Naranco, belvedere, detail



without any need for further distribution.¹³⁵ This stylistic comparison, taken together with the iconography of the panels depicting figures carrying goods and the mounted warriors, raises the possibility that the decoration could have been inspired by booty taken from the Vikings in 844. In addition to any valuables produced in Scandinavia, these Vikings had been plundering and looting in Britain and France during the preceding year so they may have been carrying a diverse collection of valuables, and perhaps slaves.¹³⁶ The Arabic historian, Ibn Hayyān, talks of booty seized from Vikings

ships in other circumstances – money, goods, and prisoners – in 859, when the ships of the emir Muhammad ‘were patrolling between the confines (hā’it) of Ifranja (probably Francia) in the east and the furthest confines of Ghilisīa (Galicia) in the west’.¹³⁷

But what kind of building was the ‘belvedere’? As the Chronicle of Albelda mentions a church and ‘palaces’, it is normally assumed that nearby San Miguel de Lillo is the church and that the belvedere was a palace.¹³⁸ However, as Roger Collins pointed out, the later version of the Chronicle of Alfonso III states that Ramiro’s church was dedicated to the Virgin and an altar inscription from the belvedere corroborates that dedication by Ramiro I and his queen, Paterna, in June 848.¹³⁹ One popular interpretation is that the church of San Miguel was originally dedicated to the Virgin and that the altar was moved along with its dedication to the belvedere at a later date. However, attempts to reconcile this with the chronicle descriptions and charter evidence pose several difficulties.¹⁴⁰ Progress may be made by returning to the altar and to its inscription. The altar has a base constructed from six stone slabs of unequal width, united by fluted decoration similar to that carved on the exterior of the building.¹⁴¹ The altar slab overhangs the base and is decorated with a vegetal scroll border. Around the four sides runs an inscription between two incised arrow borders that dates it to June 848.¹⁴² It describes Ramiro I as both Christ’s servant (*famulus*) and as glorious (*gloriosus*), which confirms the idea that victory may be an important part of this

¹³⁵ For example, Guilmain, 1971, fig. 9; Coroneo, 2012, 215–18; Schlunk, 1947, 355–60.

¹³⁶ *Annals of St.-Bertin*, 1991, for an entry on raiding in 843; Dozy, 1987, 30.

¹³⁷ Christys, 2015, 49–50.

¹³⁸ Also known as San Miguel de Lillo.

¹³⁹ Collins, 1989, 15–16.

¹⁴⁰ Collins, 1989, 15–16.

¹⁴¹ Sastre, 2012, 179–208.

¹⁴² Collins, 1989, 15.

dedication.¹⁴³ If the 'belvedere' were in part a monument of thanksgiving for Ramiro I's defeat of the Vikings, it would not have been inappropriate to have an altar located within it for liturgical commemoration. The inscription talks of renovating 'a small building too consumed by age' (*renovasti habitaculum nimia vetustate consumptum*).¹⁴⁴ The designation of the structure as *habitaculum* is surely also significant, perhaps indicating a previous Roman or late antique structure on the site that took advantage of its commanding panorama and access to water. Such an association with the classical past may have determined the choice of this site, which is not a typical villa site but has more in common with Medinaceli in Soria, where the surviving structure is indeed a Roman triumphal arch.

It is difficult to interpret the belvedere because most secular architecture of this period in Europe has been lost. The only surviving structure that has any resonance is the 'gatehouse' at Lorsch (Hesse, possibly late eighth century), which was not a gateway but a freestanding building that in its form and decoration referenced the Arch of Constantine.¹⁴⁵ The designer of the belvedere may at least have heard of that structure. Yet Lorsch does not explain Naranco. The belvedere is at once too exposed to function as a palace, especially in the winter, and also lacks appropriate spaces for any regular celebration of the liturgy. It has been explained as a hunting lodge, and it would have functioned well as a viewing platform, although these were usually temporary structures.¹⁴⁶ One other building type may help to interpret this unique structure, the *mirador* favoured by Islamic rulers on their garden

estates (*munyas*) from the 'Abbāsid period. This concept of a royal pavilion that encapsulated the relationship of the ruler to the world of nature may have influenced the belvedere even if its realisation was other.¹⁴⁷ The Romans had a long tradition of integrating the inside and the outside of their country estates and even their suburban villas and gardens, and the Byzantines and the 'Abbāsid rulers in the East had developed this into a sophisticated metaphor of rulership that could be used for receiving important guests and that played with notions of viewing and being viewed.¹⁴⁸ Hence the belvedere on Monte Naranco can be seen as a Christian combination of a triumphal arch, a chapel of thanksgiving, and a *mirador*, which Ramiro and his successors could use to impress his people and visiting envoys. Ramiro I's newfound wealth may have enabled him to commission designers and sculptors who, between them, understood the Christian and Islamic development of the classical tradition, and had the ability to adapt both to specific local circumstances. The origin of those masons and artists remains a mystery, but it is possible, as Miguel Alba has suggested, that Ramiro drew on the kind of architectural expertise found much further south on the *Via de la Plata* at Mérida, where a wide variety of building techniques were employed not only in the Alcazaba, including barrel vaulting, but also in houses in the Morería.¹⁴⁹ Although related antique structures could still be found as near as Gijón, it would not have been possible to reinvent them without considerable expertise in the construction of masonry and vaulting.¹⁵⁰ The nature of the decorative sculpture, especially the foliate work and affronted birds, also suggests the

143 Leisten, 1996, 7-26; Gil, 1985, 188.

144 Collins, 1989, 15.

145 McClendon, 2005, 92-101; Stalley, 1999, 39-40 and 97.

146 Creighton, 2009.

147 Ruggles, 2003, 90-91; Anderson, 2013, 137-40, 155-62.

148 Ruggles, 2003, 86, 92-101.

149 Alba, 2007, 187-89.

150 Fernández Ochoa, 2012.

involvement of sculptors from the south. The emir of Córdoba and his towns within reach of the Atlantic coast may have been grateful for Ramiro I's defeat of the marauders, which substantially reduced the capacity of the Viking forces. Such gratitude could have initiated diplomatic relations with the usual exchange of gifts. Alternatively, Ramiro I could have purchased masons and sculptors from them or from north of the Pyrenees with his newfound wealth.¹⁵¹

In Oviedo the building that is closest to the belvedere in form is a much smaller structure known as the *cámara santa*. It also has two storeys, an upper space with a brick vault over the east end, and a brick-vaulted semi-basement; blind arcades articulate the eastern exterior wall. The shorter northern wall has two pilaster buttresses and a small window with a decorative stucco grille (*celosía*). As María de los Ángeles Utrero has argued, the differences between the vaults at Naranco, and in the *cámara santa*, may have been required by the use of brick in the latter.¹⁵² Since the *cámara santa* was almost entirely destroyed in the bombing of 1934, what stands today is largely a reconstruction of a building that had been remodelled in the later twelfth century.¹⁵³ At some point, perhaps in the tenth century, the lower space was used for relics of two martyrs from Córdoba, Eulogius and Leocritia, and the upper space as the treasury of the cathedral. Given the stylistic links with the belvedere on Monte Naranco, it is possible that the *cámara santa* was built during the reign of Ramiro I, perhaps as a strong room for the booty from the defeat of the Vikings.

On the basis of sculptural style, two churches complete this group of *ramirense* buildings. Santa Cristina de Lena occupies a dramatic site on a hillock, 35 kilometres south of Oviedo, overlooking the Roman road from León to Gijón (fig. 53). Some Roman foundations and mosaics were discovered at a site often identified with the *mansio* of Memoriana; largely unexcavated, it could have provided masonry and colonnettes for Santa Cristina, or there may already have been a structure on the hill. It is usually assumed that Ramiro I's son, Ordoño I (r. 850-866) built this church. In the Chronicle of Alfonso III (*Rotense*) he is credited with fortifying Tuy above the estuary of the river Miño, presumably to protect it from possible Viking raids, as well as León, Astorga, and Amaya, building their gates on high ground, so the territory around Santa Cristina de Lena was secured.¹⁵⁴ The church was substantially restored on several occasions between 1893 and 1981.¹⁵⁵ Before that, probably in the tenth century, it was fitted with a 'Mozarabic' screen, and the walls were covered in painted plaster, now lost.¹⁵⁶ At the core is a small central nave (10m x 6m), to which four annexes were added, one on each side, to give a cruciform plan. Unusual for the ninth century, these annexes could have been added at a later date, perhaps as part of the tenth-century adaptations.¹⁵⁷ The southern annex is a porch with a tribune above; the northern annex housed an altar, whilst the function of the lateral annexes is uncertain. Inside, blind arcades articulate the central nave in the same way as in the belvedere at Naranco. At Santa Cristina de Lena, however, the thirty-two buttresses do not always coincide with the supports of the blind arcade, further highlighting the modifications

151 For the importance of wealth in the acquisition of technical skill, see Lavan, 2007, xxix-xxx.

152 Utrero, 2006a, 188.

153 García Cuetos, 1997, 119-35.

154 Wolf, 2011, 141, para 25; Christys, 2015, 74.

155 Arias, 1999, 194; Utrero, 2006a, 458.

156 Arias, 1999, 195.

157 Arias, 1999, 193-97.

Figure 53 Santa Cristina de Lena, exterior

made to this structure.¹⁵⁸ The faces of the capitals are divided by cable moulding into triangular panels, like those at Naranco, filled with affronted animals or small human figures. The barrel-vaulted roof has been rebuilt, but its transverse arches still come down to meet oblong panels with mounted warriors in low relief over discs containing rampant lions. The eastern section of the hall is raised and reached by steps. The eastern wall has small medallions in the spandrels of the arches that rest on twin engaged columns with spiral cable motif, like those at Naranco. Not only is it probable that the same designer and builders constructed the belvedere and Santa Cristina de Lena, but it is also possible that Santa Cristina de Lena originally served a similar function as the belvedere. It may have been Ordoño I's thanksgiving

monument for the expansion of his kingdom to the south and east.¹⁵⁹ The chronicles talk of Ordoño's military successes in general terms, but the *Chronicle of Alfonso III (Rotense)* gives an extended account of his subjection of Mūsa ibn Mūsa of the *muwallad* Banū Qāsi, when both were trying to annex Álava. In a battle of c. 859, it says, Ordoño I deprived Mūsa not only of military equipment, but also of the 'gifts' that Charles the Bald had sent him, and demolished Mūsa's new stronghold at Albelda. This changed the balance of power in the region and enabled Ordoño to claim future military support from the Banū Qāsi, leaving the Christian kingdom of Pamplona, their previous allies, exposed to attack from Córdoba.¹⁶⁰ The heir, Fortún Garcés, was taken hostage in 860 and

¹⁵⁸ Utrero, 2006a, 458-59.

¹⁵⁹ Sastre, 2004, 13-14.

¹⁶⁰ Collins, 1995a, 248.

held in Córdoba for some twenty years. Such manoeuvring offered many opportunities for the exchange of portable objects and slaves, as booty and as ransom payments.

San Miguel de Lillo on Monte Naranco has a dedication to St. Michael the Archangel, typical for a hilltop church (fig. 54). It was a rectangular basilica with three naves, but two-thirds of the church is lost, and water had already undermined its high vaults before 1115.¹⁶¹ From the exterior, the western porch gives an impression of great verticality, and the fabric is exposed as rubble reinforced with quoins on the corners. Perhaps the patron had heard about the high silhouette of the new 'westwork' of the abbey church at Corvey (Westphalia, c.

Figure 54 Oviedo, Monte Naranco, San Miguel de Lillo



¹⁶¹ Arias, 2011, 9-47; Caballero, 2012a, 89-123.

873-885).¹⁶² Some exterior features resonate with the belvedere at Naranco, most obviously pilaster buttresses with incised decoration and windows with small Corinthian capitals and spiral columns, even though the stone windows at San Miguel are not integrated into the structure as in the belvedere, but inserted into the rubble wall. Although these windows have some of the classicizing features found on the belvedere, the upper sections in stucco have more in common with window grilles found in the Great Mosque of Córdoba. An elaborate lattice of overlapping circles even recalls examples from the Great Mosque of Damascus or, perhaps more relevantly, similar patterns on the marble panels around the mihrab at Qayrawan, usually dated to c. 862.¹⁶³ A worn inscription on one of these panels names the craftsman as Abu al-'Afiya, the servant or slave from al-Andalus (*ghulam al-andalusī*), suggesting that such expertise could be found in the south of the peninsula at that time and that it could travel.¹⁶⁴ In the interior, the surviving bays of the arcade of semi-circular arches, supported on high columns built from irregular stones (11m), once ended in square eastern chapels. Ramirese-related sculpture is found on the capitals, on impost blocks, along a string-course, over the arcade, and on column bases; according to Caballero's structural analysis these pieces have been moved and may be *spolia*.¹⁶⁵ Although most of the relief sculpture is framed by cable moulding, it uses geometric motifs not found in the belvedere or at Santa Cristina de Lena. Even more exceptionally the column bases have figurative carving within micro-architectural frames (fig. 55). The figures

¹⁶² Fernie, 2014, 40-41; Stalley, 1999, 46-51.

¹⁶³ Ettinghausen, 2001, 60, fig. 86.

¹⁶⁴ Bloom, 2015, 64.

¹⁶⁵ Arias, 1999, 172; Caballero, 2012a, 89-123; Caballero, 2008, 7-80.

Figure 55 Oviedo, Monte Naranco, San Miguel de Lillo, detail of a base (Museo Arqueológico de Asturias, Oviedo)

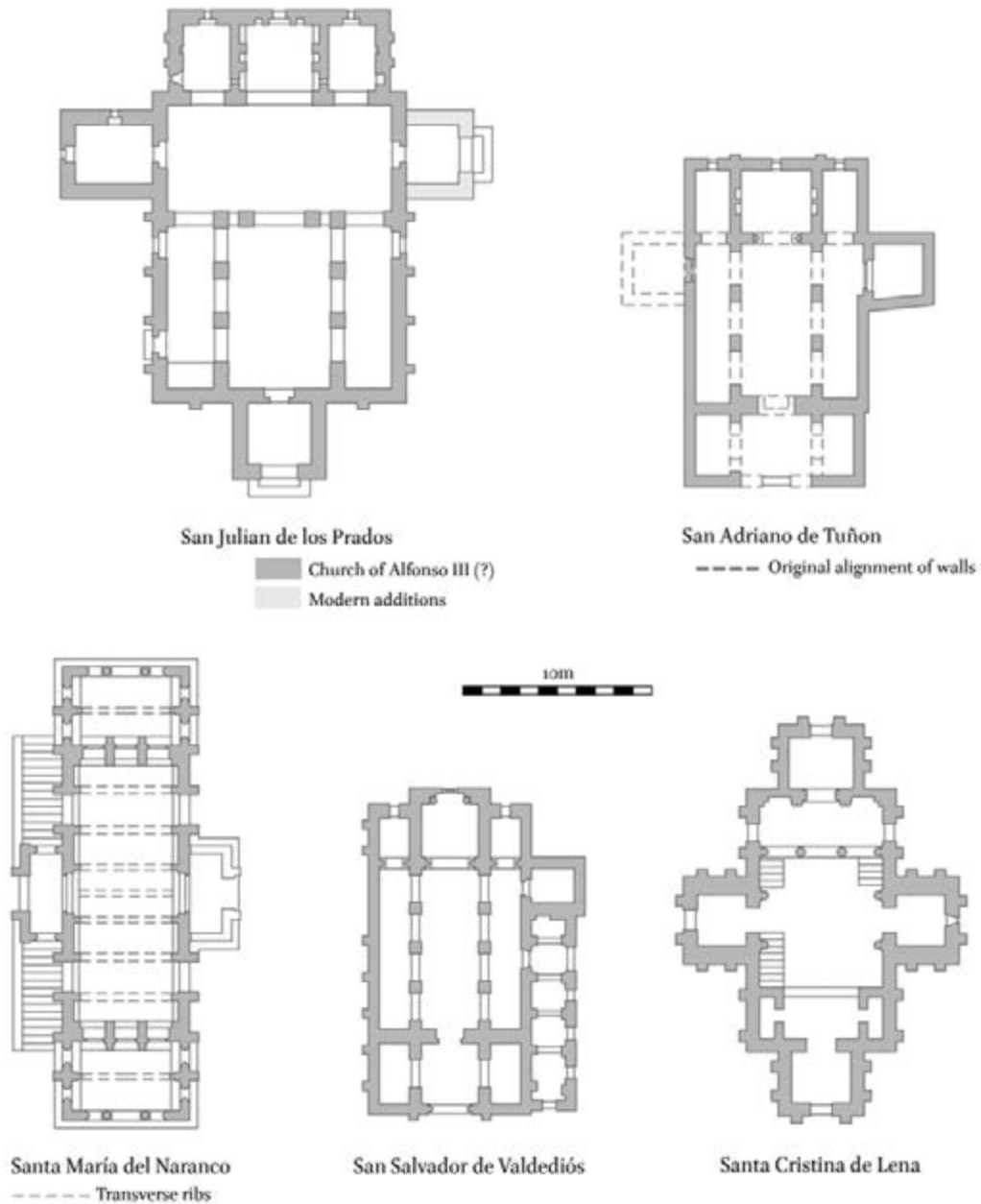


depicted under arches are winged busts, or sitting at desks, and may represent evangelists or other saints. Miniature heads fill the spandrels. As at the belvedere the carving is in low relief, and the figure style relates, for example, to the champlevé enamels on the back cover of the Lindau Gospels (Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.1, c. 760-790). It is possible that Ramiro I's Viking treasure had included metalwork that could have provided models for this carving, or they may have been inspired by manuscript illumination. Other panels, now mounted as door jambs, have been interpreted as stylized, and much enlarged, copies of an ivory consular diptych, perhaps one issued by Aerobindus in 506.¹⁶⁶ San Miguel is also noted for the tribune

¹⁶⁶ Arbeiter, 1999, 152-53, plate 31; Caballero, 2008, 32; for the groups of sculpture, see Caballero, 2012a, 97-108.

at its west end. It is often invoked in arguments that seek to link 'Asturian' buildings to Carolingian traditions, but it is not clear that this western tribune was for royal use. The access is very narrow, and it may equally have been used for the liturgy or perhaps for a small number of women who were to be kept apart. The interior decoration of the church was altered in the tenth century when some fine figurative paintings were executed. Its other main feature, the extensive and eclectic use of *spolia* or imitation *spolia* may also belong to that phase of the building.¹⁶⁷ Recent stratigraphic analysis by Luis Caballero suggests that the lower parts of San Miguel de Lillo were begun during the reign of Ramiro I or Ordoño I, but that it was completed at a later date and in a different

¹⁶⁷ Caballero, 2012a, 99-108.

Plans III Plans of Asturian churches

style.¹⁶⁸ This interpretation certainly helps to explain the composite nature of this building, which lacks any sense of coherence.

¹⁶⁸ Caballero, 2012a, 89-123.

Alfonso III and Visions of Victory

Alfonso III, known as the Great, Ordoño I's son, had a long reign, from 866 until 910.

After withstanding some challenges to his succession, he took advantage of unrest in Toledo, Mérida, and other areas of the Lower and Middle Marches to deliver a number of military successes that secured his hold on the throne.¹⁶⁹ By 874 Alfonso III had allied himself with his kingdom's most prestigious relic and commissioned a copy of Alfonso II's 'Cross of the Angels' for the church of St. James at Compostela.¹⁷⁰ Internal divisions in al-Andalus allowed his forces to advance south and west to claim Braga (Portugal) in 885 and, in 881, to raid as far as Mérida, outside which he won a major victory against Cordoban forces.¹⁷¹ All this was probably accomplished with the support of Galician magnates, such as Count Hermenegild Gutiérrez, and the families who may have supported his father and grandfather.¹⁷² In 877, according to the Chronicle of Albelda, 'Abuhalit', 'the consul of Spain and counsellor to King Muhammad' was taken in a raid on Galicia and handed over to the king in Oviedo. His brothers, son, and nephew were held as hostages until a ransom of 100,000 gold *solidi* was paid.¹⁷³ If accurate, this was a very large sum. These successes produced a rhetoric of optimism, and the Prophetic Chronicle (883) even predicted that Alfonso III was about to expel the Arabs from Spain.¹⁷⁴ The Chronicle of Albelda says that from this point he undertook the restoration of 'all the temples of the Lord' in Oviedo and the construction of royal halls.¹⁷⁵ It is usually assumed that no evidence of this programme has survived, but it is possible that some of the works in Oviedo customarily

assigned to earlier periods should be seen as products of c. 900.

Two standing churches outside Oviedo are traditionally associated with Alfonso III, Santo Adriano de Tuñón and San Salvador de Valdediós. In neither case is there hard evidence for royal patronage, and it is more likely that the churches were built by other powerful families in Asturias, or perhaps by immigrants under their patronage. Santo Adriano de Tuñón lies some 23 kilometres south of Oviedo, on a Roman road along the valley of the river Trubia. Analysis of the relevant foundation charters of 891 and 894 has argued that, although they were extensively elaborated, an original donation from Alfonso III and Queen Jimena formed the basis of the later documents.¹⁷⁶ Even so, the small basilica is a modest structure of rubble, suitable only for a rural monastery. It was altered in the baroque period and restored by Ménendez Pidal between 1949 and 1954.¹⁷⁷ The church is constructed of local stone, rough porous limestone for the ashlar quoins and rubble for the infill. Recent conservation and analysis has indicated that groups of craftsmen – stonecutters, builders, carpenters, painters and plasterers, and sculptors on site – worked independently, and that the measurement systems employed in the various media were not uniform.¹⁷⁸ The significance of this is uncertain, as it may reflect a series of campaigns, formation in different centres, or merely variations between established trade practices. The central nave is higher than the aisles and lit by large windows with restored lattice grilles, three on each side. The side aisles end in square barrel-vaulted chapels lit by small round-headed windows with grilles. An arcade of plain semi-circular arches, resting

169 Collins, 2012, 76–82.

170 Schlunk, 1950, 99–101.

171 Gil, 1985, 12; Collins, 2012, 79.

172 Portass, 2013, 283–84.

173 Constable, 1997, 57.

174 Collins, 1995a, 223 and 232.

175 Gil, 1985, 12.

176 Fernández Conde, 1995–1996, 106.

177 Caballero, 2012a, 89–123; Arias, 1999, 238.

178 Caballero, 2010b, 118.

Figure 56 San Salvador de Valdediós, exterior

on rough square masonry piers, divides the nave from the aisles. A two-light window with brick voussoirs articulates the upper section of the east wall. Nothing is known of the monks who occupied this church beyond their choice of decorative scheme. The central apse is flanked by *spolia*, two reused engaged columns, probably Roman, topped by two late antique Corinthian capitals without necking, an arrangement that recalls the columns that flanked the mihrab of the Great Mosque in Córdoba and was to become popular in the north during the tenth century. The idea of a connection with al-Andalus is strengthened by the motifs of the fragmentary wall paintings that surround the window in the central eastern chapel. Distinctively Islamic designs, a row of stepped merlons and lotus flowers in red and yellow-gold, sit alongside more obviously Christian symbols, a foliate cross and what may

be a depiction of the sun and moon from the crucifixion. It is highly likely that craftsmen from al-Andalus executed these paintings in the tenth century.¹⁷⁹ Recent research has suggested that the church at Santianes de Pravia should be seen in the same context as Tuñón and dated to *c.* 900.¹⁸⁰

San Salvador de Valdediós (fig. 56) is considerably larger than Tuñón, though also a rural church in a fertile valley, located about 25 miles northeast of Oviedo and close to the coast. Despite a tradition that connects it to the retirement of Alfonso III, nothing is known of its patrons. A marble slab, now mounted in a room on the south side of the church, records a dedication ceremony in 893 in the presence of seven bishops, including

¹⁷⁹ Fowden, 2004, xxii.

¹⁸⁰ Caballero, 2010a, 11–90.

Elleca of Zaragoza (874-902).¹⁸¹ The inscription has clearly been moved, however, so lacks a reliable provenance.¹⁸² The church was altered in the eighteenth century, restored in 1954 by Menéndez-Pidal, and again in the 1970s and in the 1980s, when its original roof was dismantled.¹⁸³ The result of all these phases is a conundrum, typologically and stylistically neither Asturian nor 'Mozarabic'.¹⁸⁴ From the exterior the central nave of the church exhibits the imposing verticality of San Miguel de Lillo with slender flat buttresses and considerably lower side aisles. The masonry is rubble with ashlar quoins, and additional ashlar blocks have been applied across the eastern facades and the upper parts of the western facade. The sides of the building were originally articulated only by flat narrow buttresses that conceal evidence of the vaulting supports.¹⁸⁵ Inside, Valdediós is a three-aisled basilica with an arcade supported on slightly irregular square pillars that have square moulded capitals and similar bases (fig. 57), perhaps developed from the rough square pillars that support the arcade at Tuñón. The east end of the church has three square barrel-vaulted chapels. According to inscriptions on the window lintels, the two side chapels were dedicated to St. James and St. John the Baptist.¹⁸⁶ The central chapel, dedicated to the Saviour, protrudes, and is flanked by two reused and reworked columns.¹⁸⁷ Their capitals, however, were newly carved, with large flat leaves articulated by decorative veins. This use of *spolia* alongside *ex novo* carving immediately sets this church apart from other

Asturian building, and signals the presence of new expertise more often associated with tenth-century 'Mozarabic' churches. Skilled construction techniques and decorative Andalusian elements appear throughout the church. Sabine Noack-Haley also noted how the capitals at the west entrance applied relief motifs familiar from Córdoba to an Asturian form. Stepped merlons ornamented the roof, and eight stone windows with small horseshoe arches light the clerestory level of the sides as well as the facades of the building. All have two arches supported on colonnettes, except for the lower window on the eastern façade which has three. The *alfiz* form belonged to al-Andalus, but much of the decoration recalls Naranco: the capitals with flat low-relief leaves and the cable-motif that encircles the astragals, the attic bases, and sometimes the arches themselves. Some of the foliate scrolls on the capitals have analogues in Córdoba, even if the palmettes recall those at Naranco.¹⁸⁸ Alterations were made to the building: a portico was added on the south side, and a western tribune may also postdate the first phase.¹⁸⁹ The portico, built in squared ashlar, was a new feature, previously unknown in Asturian architecture. The geometric lattice grille (*celosía*) that lights it follows Andalusí models. Inside, the portico is vaulted with transverse arches in brick supported on half-columns of sandstone masonry and capitals with foliate decoration. The interior was painted in a style that is also found inside the church.¹⁹⁰ Recently restored fragments show that a wall painting cycle once covered all the walls and the vaulting of the church with rich geometric and foliate decoration that presented antique forms in an

181 Fernández Conde, 1994, 213-47.

182 Utrero, 2012a, 126-7.

183 Arias, 1999, 223-24.

184 Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 76-81; Arias, 1999, 215-34.

185 Utrero, 2012a, 130.

186 Arbeiter, 1999, 175-80; 192-203; Arbeiter, 2005, 15.

187 Caballero, 2012b, 435.

188 Noack-Haley, 1991, 111; Bango, 1992b, 93-132; Alonso, 1993, 398-404.

189 Utrero, 2012a, 131.

190 Cabañero, 2004, 183-85.

Figure 57 San Salvador de Valdediós, nave and chancel

Andalusian guise.¹⁹¹ In the central chapel three Greek crosses are painted above the lights of the window with a chrismon in a round medallion (*clipeus*) to one side. In the vault, alternating discs and quatrefoils in red and yellow-gold create a schematic pattern of fictive coffering. On the vault of the north chapel of St. James, hexagons and squares filled with foliate motifs have been linked to the Bāb al-Wazarā in Córdoba. Similar comparisons have been made for the trefoil motifs on the vault of the southern chapel.¹⁹² A similar painting scheme is found in the mid-tenth-century church of Santiago de Peñalba. San Salvador de Valdediós is thus full of contradictions but, unlike the mix at San Miguel de Lillo, they cohere. This eclecticism could mark a transition or represent a

sophisticated composition. As Caballero and Utrero have shown, this building required a range of craftsmen, carpenters, jobbing builders, masons, sculptors, blacksmiths, plasterers, brickworkers, and painters.¹⁹³ The patrons are often assumed to be monastic immigrants attracted by Alfonso III's military success. This is difficult to prove, but such a scenario might help to explain the presence of such a varied group of artisans with Andalusian expertise.¹⁹⁴

This leaves only one group of churches outside Oviedo associated with Alfonso III, the church of Santiago de Compostela dedicated in 899, San Salvador de Antealtares that abutted it east-west, and a small chapel nearby dedicated to St. John the Baptist.¹⁹⁵ Weighing the

191 Puras, 1999, 251-58.

192 Arias, 1999, 228-34.

193 Caballero, 2012b, 435-36; Utrero, 2012a, 125-45.

194 Bango, 1979, 319-38.

195 Williams, 2008a, 165-6, 174; Hauschild, 1992, 89-103.

eleventh- and twelfth-century documentary evidence alongside the late-nineteenth- and mid-twentieth-century archaeological evidence, John Williams has produced a convincing reconstruction of the structures around the supposed tomb. An 885 charter, recorded in the twelfth-century cartulary from Santiago de Compostela, known as *Tumbo A*, speaks of a tomb 'under arches of marble'.¹⁹⁶ Excavations have not revealed any marble but rather vestiges of a rectangular structure that may well belong to the end of the ninth century or even the end of the tenth.¹⁹⁷ The church attributed to Alfonso III has been interpreted as single-aisled, narrower than the nave of the present Romanesque cathedral, where the west wall aligned with the west side of the current transept. A square chapel appears to have surrounded the sacred area associated with the tomb. To make sense of later disputes over the possession of the tomb and its altars, Williams argues that the tomb site also formed part of the monastic church of San Salvador de Antealtares.¹⁹⁸ According to his persuasive theory, the two churches not only abutted east-west, but also overlapped. The monks of the monastery of Antealtares were responsible for the care of the tomb and its liturgy, much of which would have taken place on an altar above the tomb. The church of San Salvador would have had a second sanctuary, an altar at the east end, probably in another small square chapel. This architectural arrangement would have given the monks easy access to the tomb from Antealtares, whilst enabling them to restrict the flow of pilgrims to the church of St. James. This enhancement of the cult and its visual expression is typical of the reign of Alfonso III, and his court, with Bishop Sisnando of Iria-Compostela, may have

¹⁹⁶ Plötz, 2008, 43-44.

¹⁹⁷ Hauschild, 2008, 89-103; Suárez Otero, 2012, 415-41.

¹⁹⁸ Williams, 2008b, 184-91.

even been responsible for its invention.¹⁹⁹ It is only from this period that the cult of the tomb of St. James began to acquire the prominence that would reach its medieval apogee in the twelfth century. Richard Fletcher suggested, probably correctly, that Alfonso might have been using his royal patronage to establish control over an unruly Galicia.²⁰⁰

Towards the end of his reign Alfonso III seems to have focused on securing the memory of his achievements and making donations to the Church to demonstrate his piety. According to a charter, which is probably interpolated but contains original material, he gave nine manuscripts to Oviedo cathedral in 908. One was described as a Bible from Seville and 'by the hand of St. Isidore' himself, whilst a second Bible had come from Córdoba as a gift from 'Aboaldi', thought to be another corruption of the name of the captive Hashim ben 'Abd al-Azīz.²⁰¹ The manuscript may have formed part of his ransom, or it may have been sent as a diplomatic gift. In 884 a Mozarab priest from Toledo, called Dulcidius, was sent to Muhammad I as part of the negotiations for a peace treaty, and he returned with the relics of the martyrs Eulogius and Leocritia, and perhaps a number of manuscripts including Eulogius's own writings.²⁰² Both manuscripts are lost, and nothing is known about any illumination. Richard Fletcher and many other eminent historians have accepted the authenticity of the text of a letter written from Alfonso III to the monks of St. Martin at Tours in 906 that agreed to purchase an imperial crown of gold and

¹⁹⁹ Van Herwaarden, 2003, 313-14.

²⁰⁰ Fletcher, 1984, 73-77.

²⁰¹ Díaz y Díaz, 1969b, 389; Williams, 1999, 181; Floriano, 1951, no.192, 362-72.

²⁰² Tolán, 2002, 98 and 310 n.123; the information came from a text written in the *Breviario antiguo* of Oviedo; Collins, 2012, 78.

precious stones (*corona imperialis*) and also offered to exchange hagiographic manuscripts.²⁰³ Even if it is a fabrication, the artistic connection was presumably regarded as plausible. The crown was to be collected from Bordeaux by members of Alfonso III's household travelling by sea. A cross known as the 'Cross of Victory', now in the treasury of Oviedo cathedral, may corroborate the arrival of such costly metal-work. An inscription says that it was given by Alfonso III and Queen Jimena to San Salvador de Oviedo in 908. Like the 'Cross of Angels', this object received a drastic restoration after the bombing of 1934.²⁰⁴ Technical analysis must, therefore, rest primarily on the expert who saw it before it was damaged, Helmut Schlunk. He stated that the techniques employed in this remarkable cross, the filigree patterns, the setting of the gems and pearls, and the enamelling were indistinguishable from work carried out on the book cover of St. Emmeran made in Rheims or at Saint-Denis near Paris.²⁰⁵ Relying on Schlunk's earlier work, Peter Lasko assessed the overall aesthetic effect of 'Cross of Victory' and, although he also saw some relevant Carolingian comparisons, including the cover of the Codex Aureus and the 'Ardennes' cross of Louis the Pious, ultimately thought that 'the whole delicate glittering effect' was closer to Byzantine gold-work.²⁰⁶ Both these scholars saw North Italy as the source of the small zoomorphic enamels on the cross and, overall, a North Italian origin is most likely, as there is no evidence for direct contact between Asturias and Constantinople. In contrast, there is well-documented and regular contact between Rome and Constantinople in the second half of the ninth century, with detailed

accounts of the luxurious gifts sent to the popes by the emperors.²⁰⁷ The inscription on the cross says that it was 'made in Castle Gauzon' (*operatum es in castello Gavzon*), and this has been taken to refer to the castle at Gauzon on the Asturian coast, west of Gijón. Yet it seems an unwise place to set up goldsmiths so close to the coast and thus exposed to potential attack from the sea, when they could have been based in Oviedo, safely behind the mountain range. Goldsmiths may have come to Asturias to make the cross, but it is equally possible that the cross was purchased, as Schlunk and Lasko suggested, and that only the covering on the reverse was made in Asturias.

This distinctive form of the cross, the *crux gemmata*, associated with Alfonso III, is a bejewelled version of the cross in St. Eirene in Constantinople. Its splayed arms and gold casing, studded with gems, embodied a particular connection to the imperial cross, according to legend, erected on Golgotha in Jerusalem by Emperor Constantine.²⁰⁸ Through a series of replications and representations, especially in the sixth century, this type of cross became a shorthand for imperial piety. Most surviving examples come from Rome or Ravenna, notably the cross of Justin II in the Vatican (r. 565-578) and sixth-century mosaic depictions in Santa Pudenziana in Rome and Sant' Apollinare in Classe in Ravenna.²⁰⁹ Another version of the *crux gemmata* is found on the base of a casket traditionally thought to have been given c. 900 to the cathedral of Astorga, where it is now, because of another inscription that records the names of King Alfonso III and Queen Jimena on the lid.²¹⁰ Astorga had been the seat of Al-

203 Fletcher, 1984, Appendix C, 317-23.

204 Arbeiter, 2009, 401-16.

205 Schlunk, 1950, 105.

206 Lasko, 1972, 32, 53-57 and 66.

207 Osborne, 2011, 222-36.

208 Hahn, 2012, 79-82; for the Constantinian legend see Milner, 1996, 77-99; Alonso, 2010, 25-31.

209 Hahn, 2012, 73-74.

210 AMS, cat. no. 70, 142-41.

fonso III's brother Vermudo and the centre of a seven-year revolt with Arab support, so it may have been particularly important to exert symbolic control over it.²¹¹ The repoussé cross with suspended alpha and omega letters on the base may have originally been part of a book cover or perhaps of a book shrine. Unlike the 'Cross of Victory', the casket employs techniques more obviously available in the peninsula, and in its iconography and style combines an interest in things Carolingian and Andalusian. The wooden core is covered by sheets of silver-gilt with figurative decoration in repoussé. Both long sloping sides of the truncated pyramidal lid once bore evangelist symbols merged with the four wheeled beasts of Ezekiel (Ez. 1:4-28), but Mark and Matthew have been lost. Each of the short sides has an angel with long wings on stalks, one labelled as 'GABRI/HEL'. On the top of the lid is the vision of the Lamb of God, an elongated 'AGNUS DEI' holding a Greek cross, and the names of Alfonso III (ADEFONSVS REX) and Jimena (SCEMENA REGINA). The sides of the casket open between two rows of ornament framed by semi-circular arches of cloisonné. The lower arches contain low-relief angels who look up and gesture towards the vision of the Lamb; schematic trees occupy the arches on the upper tier. The iconography has clear Apocalyptic overtones and has been linked to the liturgical use of the Adoration of the Lamb (Apoc. 5:11-12), or its depiction in Beatus manuscripts.²¹² Indeed the closest parallels for the style of this figurative work can be found in these tenth-century manuscripts, and Charles Little has pointed to the 'striking resemblance' between the Lamb on this casket and that in a Beatus of c. 1000 (Biblioteca de El Escorial, 11.5).²¹³ This raises questions about the date of

the casket, which might benefit from further research.

The 'Cross of Victory' brings us back to San Julian de los Prados, where it was the most distinctive decorative element, and one that links the church to Alfonso III. The typology and iconography of the building also fit most appropriately with this last phase of Alfonso III's reign. The scale of the building, its emphatically late antique massing, and the choice of classical motifs express that king's aspirations and claims to *imperium* (fig. 58).²¹⁴ These artists were full of invention, displayed in their choice and deployment of antique and late antique motifs (fig. 59). They may also have been well aware of their quotation of mosaics in Ravenna, and perhaps even of work further afield in Constantinople, when they devised the micro-architectural frieze. The inclusion of 'palaces' in perspective and on the diagonal raises the possibility that the artists could have been copying works in Córdoba that might have in turn quoted the micro-architectural mosaics of the Great Mosque of Damascus.²¹⁵ There is no evidence for this, but other quotations of Damascus in Córdoba are well attested.²¹⁶ All that is reasonably certain is that San Julian de los Prados claimed a Byzantine-Gothic inheritance for the kings of Oviedo. The programme at San Julian was thus fictive in more than one sense. It employed illusionistic painting techniques, but it also created an interior that evoked late antique buildings from sixth-century Ravenna, or Carolingian buildings from eighth-century Aachen, or even palaces in ninth-century Constantinople. It was an ideological conjuring trick. The whole building was passed off as one worthy of Alfonso II and his Carolingian

211 Collins, 1995a, 232.

212 Velado, 1991, 192; Sepúlveda González, 1989, 148-58.

213 AMS, 157-59, cat. no. 81.

214 Bango, 1992a, 303-313; Collins, 2012, 72.

215 Cruz, 2012, 169-75.

216 Fernández-Puertas, 2009, 380 and 405; Clarke, Nicola, 2012, 40-41.

Figure 58 San Julian de los Prados (Santullano), exterior



Figure 59 San Julian de los Prados (Santullano), wall painting



contacts, which had to rank in turn with the highest achievements of the Goths in Ravenna. The commissioner, designers, and artists well understood what they were doing in making their ideology concrete. Yet there was also a playful aspect to this sense of invention. Around the same time another much smaller structure was conceived. Santa Eulalia de Bóveda, 14 km outside Lugo (Galicia), appears to be a small shrine with antique origins. In practice the site was probably connected to Roman mining, as it is built over a network of engineered water channels.²¹⁷ In the late ninth century, masonry was reused to create a small two-storied building. Both levels had barrel-vaulted rooms, of which the lower is largely intact. A precinct was built around the horseshoe-arched entrance with sculptures of dancing figures that have

defied easy categorisation. Inside, the walls and vault were once covered in paintings; a substantial amount of the decoration survives and more was recorded (fig. 60). Some of the Roman motifs, including fictive hexagonal coffering and garlands growing from urns, are close to those found in San Julián de los Prados. Others of great charm cover the vault with a foliate grid filled with birds, including cockerels and peacocks. The style of the foliage may have copied local Roman painting in Lugo (*Lucus Augusti*) to judge from a fragment found recently in a late antique *domus*, although birds were generally popular in Roman mosaics and wall paintings.²¹⁸ Santa Eulalia de Bóveda is an excellent small example of the ability of artists around Alfonso III's court to create plausible imaginative spaces.

Figure 60 Santa Eulalia de Bóveda (Lugo), interior



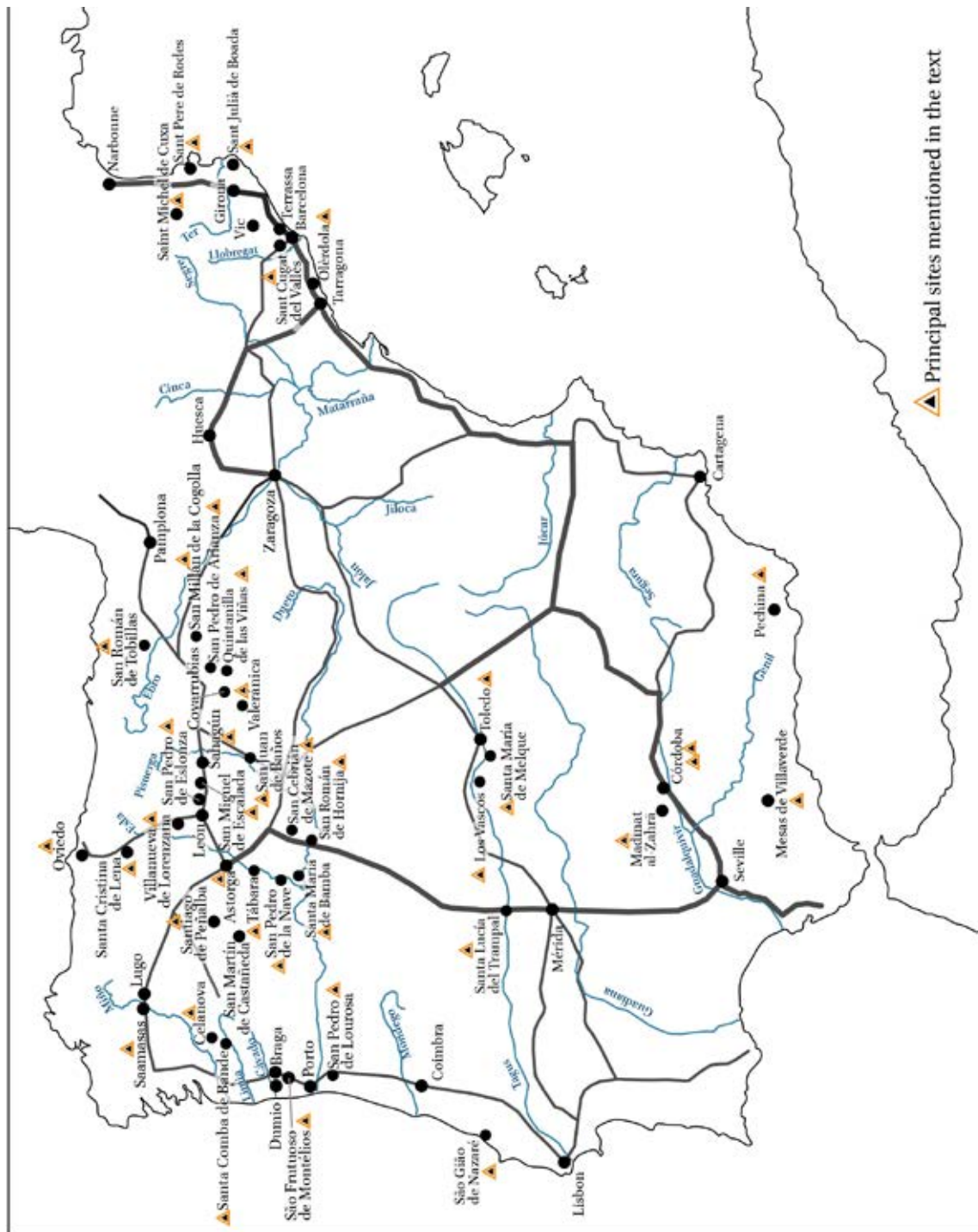
²¹⁷ Vidal, 2004, 57–83.

²¹⁸ Blanco-Rotea, 2009, 149–98.

By viewing buildings of the north and south of the peninsula alongside one another, this chapter has proposed a narrative that differs in certain key respects from the traditional account. This no longer sees the reign of Alfonso II as an important period of innovative building, and instead views the reign of Ramiro I as the period of change, linking its advances to the injection of wealth and diplomatic relations that resulted from his defeat of the Vikings. Internal conflict within the emirate of al-Andalus allowed Ramiro's grandson, Alfonso III, to make temporary military gains. These in turn enabled shifts of population from the south to the north,

although the migrants were not necessarily all Christian and not necessarily all free. This was a period of ideological creativity. Just as the court chroniclers manufactured history on the page, so artists constructed history through their buildings. This ability to counterfeit a concrete past was to develop throughout the tenth century and to confound scholars for more than a millennium. Despite being the end of a chapter, this pause does not represent a caesura in artistic production. Many of the buildings and objects included here could arguably belong to the early tenth century, and all had eventful afterlives in the tenth century and beyond.

Map VI Map of the Peninsula in the Tenth Century



5 The Great Tenth Century

The tenth century was a period of great artistic invention, most evidently in the Byzantine Empire under Constantine Porphyrogenitus (r. 913-959), but also in 'Abbāsīd Samarra, Fatimid Cairo, Ottonian Trier, and Umayyad Córdoba.¹ Each of these dynastic kingdoms looked to Byzantium for enrichment of their own visual cultures, and all had direct dealings with Constantinople through envoys, trade or marriage.² The caliphs of Córdoba drew on the technical expertise of Byzantium and often attributed fine work to Byzantine craftsmen, even when it was executed by local artists.³ The Christian kingdoms in the north of the peninsula also gazed towards Byzantium, but their knowledge of it was mainly acquired through the prism of Córdoba. Such manifold layered Byzantine references in the architecture of the tenth century have led to considerable academic entanglement. On the other side of the Pyrenees, Carolingian France did not share fully in this cultural milieu and may have experienced a period of relative decline and disintegration at the end of the ninth century.⁴ The Iberian Christian kingdoms preferred to look south instead of north, and relations between them and al-Andalus fluctuated across the century. The first years saw the end of the reign of King Alfonso III of Asturias and that of Emir 'Abd Allah in al-Andalus. Whilst the sons of the Asturian king were not without military success, 'Abd al-Rahmān III (r. 912-961) made

more rapid progress, and by 929 he was in a position to declare himself Caliph, a challenge to the 'Abbāsīds of Syria and to the Fatimids of Egypt.⁵ The reign of Ramiro II of León (r. 931-951) brought some military success to the north, notably in the battle of Simancas (939). This enabled him, along with the counts of Castile and the king of Pamplona, to sign a peace treaty with 'Abd al-Rahmān III in 941. Ramiro II's successors were weaker, however, and by the time that 'Abd al-Rahmān III died twenty years later, León, Castile, and Pamplona were client states of al-Andalus. 'Abd al-Rahmān had increased the number of professional slave soldiers in his army (*Saqā-liba*), a policy that helped him to extend his control into North Africa, through the conquest of Ceuta in 931 and a set of alliances with the Zanāta of the western Maghrib and the former Fatimid governor of Fez.⁶ The achievements of his father, and the trade routes that they protected, allowed the next caliph, al-Hakam II (r. 961-76), to bring Cordoban art and architecture to an apogee. Al-Hakam increased the echelons of slaves and freedmen who ran most aspects of the court, from the kitchens to the library. They also oversaw the craftsmen who worked on luxury textiles, ivories, metalwork, and the royal building projects.⁷ Al-Hakam's son, Hishām II (r. 976-1013), began his reign as a minor, as did his Christian contemporary King Ramiro III of León (r. 961-985). Internal disputes troubled both monarchs. In al-Andalus this instability allowed the vizier (*hajib*) al-Mansur to rise rapidly to power,

1 Cormack, 2000, 105-42

2 Bloom, 2007, 4.

3 Ettinghausen, 2001, 7.

4 Maclean, 2003; for a contrary view of a flourishing economy in the Carolingian empire see McCormick, 2001, 6-12, primarily agrarian; and Verhulst, 2002.

5 Brett, 2001, 233-34.

6 Safran, 2000, 25-32; Catlos, 2014, 26-27; Anderson, 2013, 32-33.

7 Anderson, 2013, 32-33; Calvo, 2014, 12.

which he maintained through constant military activity, undertaking over fifty campaigns against the Christian kingdoms between 977 and 1002. Both Christian and Islamic records wrote unremittingly negative accounts of his rule, perhaps unfairly.⁸ These political events give a shape to the century, which is not always reflected in accounts of artistic production across the peninsula.

The dates traditionally proposed for 'Mozarabic' buildings in the north of the peninsula are concentrated in the first four decades of the century. In contrast, most dated 'Mozarabic' illuminated manuscripts were made between 945 and 975. This discrepancy is puzzling. Whilst peaks of achievement across the arts do not necessarily go together, a flourishing manuscript culture more often accompanied or preceded a fertile period of building. The height of northern manuscript production coincided with the time of greatest artistic and architectural activity in al-Andalus under al-Hakam II in Córdoba. Only the buildings of the north stand apart, as experts ascribe almost none of them to the third quarter of the tenth century. Although it is possible to envisage a decline in artistic production in the northern kingdoms alongside a cultural highpoint in the south, such a hypothesis assumes more substantial boundaries between the communities than history suggests. This chapter will propose that the art and architecture of the north was deeply connected to that of Córdoba and in constant dialogue with it. Indeed there is no reason why the most innovative buildings in the north could not have been built in the 970s. Far from being the isolated areas depicted on maps of the reconquest, the Christian kingdoms and al-Andalus had many forms of regular contact operating along the north-south routes of the peninsula. These did not represent some form

of idealized *convivencia*, where the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian peoples might have lived together in harmony and equality, but constant shifts of power and identity, which required careful negotiation.

Some of the interaction was violent, and raiding regularly carried off booty and people, and there was a significant slave trade. Diplomatic liaison often involved the exchange of prisoners or presented them as 'gifts', as labour was one of the most valuable commodities. None of this was exceptional for the period, and similar activity took place in Constantinople.⁹ Commerce was otherwise constrained, as the wool, arms, and furs produced in the north could not purchase many of the luxury goods produced in the south. People also moved voluntarily, and some migrants came to the north, although direct evidence for this is restricted to two lost foundation inscriptions. Each refers to an abbot from Córdoba, the first to Alfonso at San Miguel de Escalada and the second to John at San Martín de Castañeda. Rulers could meet in person to seal treaties, as did Queen Tota of Pamplona and 'Abd al-Rahmān III in 924. The emir improvised a ceremony in which he received Tota as a subject, whilst acknowledging her as queen-regent and formalising the treaty with an exchange of gifts.¹⁰ Above all, envoys travelled from León to Córdoba, seeking assistance or carrying tribute payments, and they sometimes spent substantial periods at court where their hosts were probably the leaders of the local Christian community. In 941 diplomats travelled in the opposite direction from Córdoba to León after the caliph's defeat at Simancas. 'Abd al-Rahmān III's senior Jewish diplomat, Hasdai ibn Shaprut, stayed in León for

8 Rosser-Owen, 2004.

9 Anderson, 2009, 86-113; Grabar, 1997, 115-129; Cutler, 2001, 247-78; Algazi, 2003, 9-28; Bijsterveld, 2000, 123-56; Davies, 2010, 217-37.

10 Anderson, 2014, 15-41.

several months to negotiate terms, assisted by the bishops of Elvira and Seville.¹¹ These occasions would have provided exceptionally good opportunities for the exchange of gifts, artistic ideas, and perhaps also expertise in the form of craftsmen. Some alliances were sealed through an exchange of gifts and women. Fairchild Ruggles has traced the arrival of northern Christian concubines in Córdoba – many coming from the kingdom of Pamplona – from the reign of Muhammad I (r. 852–886) onwards.¹² ‘Abd al-Rahmān III’s grandmother was the daughter of King García of Pamplona, called Iñiga, or Durr (Pearl) by her Andalusī name, and al-Hakam II had two sons by a Basque woman called Subh (Dawn). As a result the caliphs often had fair skin and hair. This practice of producing heirs of Umayyad descent on their father’s side by a mother with no tribal allegiance in al-Andalus, as opposed to an official wife, was a deliberate strategy that was designed to avoid potential claims of other dynasties. The practice was continued by the *hajib* al-Mansur who took the daughter of Sancho Garcés of Pamplona (r. 970–994) as his ‘wife’ in 983.¹³ Similar ‘marriages’ took place between Christian women and the *muwallad* rulers in the north like the Banū Qāsi.¹⁴ On the other hand, Arab families did not give their women to the Christian rulers, as that would have been regarded as an act of submission. This summary of contact between the north and south of the peninsula in the tenth century shows the Christian kingdoms in a subordinate political position. But were they culturally subordinate?

Possible answers to that question have centred on the term ‘Mozarabic’, which has

been used since the early twentieth century to denote the buildings and manuscripts of the Christian kingdoms. The word derives from Arabic and means ‘would be Arab’. The term is now contested, perhaps most vigorously by Isidro Bango, who has even called it abusive.¹⁵ He prefers the term ‘repopulation architecture’, but that descriptor has not displaced ‘Mozarabic’ in general parlance nor in much art historical writing. John Williams has been similarly dismissive in his seminal work on manuscripts, where he has cast doubts on any pervasive Islamicization of artistic production in the northern kingdoms.¹⁶ The literature on this debate is voluminous, partly because it is difficult to separate the stylistic descriptor ‘Mozarabic’ from that applied to people, the Christians living under Muslim rule in the peninsula, called ‘Mozarabs’. This immediately embroils the term in questions concerning the ethnic origin and religious affiliation of both artists and patrons, a problem that does not exist for ‘Romanesque’ or ‘Gothic’.¹⁷ Consequently some scholars have attempted to limit ‘Mozarabic’ to art produced by Christians in al-Andalus or, like Jerrilynn Dodds, to art produced by a small identifiable group of Christians who had emigrated from al-Andalus to the north and who exhibited a particular approach to patronage.¹⁸ Where the term ‘Mozarabic’ is used here, it is for two reasons. The first is pragmatic: the term continues to be used widely as it denotes a recognizable body of material, which could be said to cohere just as much, or even more than, the material that is defined by other established but questioned terms like ‘Romanesque’ and ‘Gothic’. The second is more controversial but is at the heart of the analysis

11 Carriedo Tejedo, 2008, 21–60; Martínez Díez, 1986, 340–42.

12 Ruggles, 2004, 71–74.

13 Barton, 2011, 8.

14 Barton, 2011, 6–8.

15 Bango, 2007b, 73–88; and Bango, 1994, 174.

16 Williams, 1994a, 143–57.

17 Arce Sainz, 2009, 31–39.

18 Dodds, 1990, 47–58.

presented here, as it concerns an identifiable shared taste or aesthetic sensitivity found both in the north and the south but with its creative core in al-Andalus. This is more demonstrably the case in architecture, where there is also clear technical dependency on expertise preserved and developed under the Umayyads. Patrons in the north wished to partake of the high-level tenth-century culture that they saw in al-Andalus, and to that extent they were 'would-be Arab' (or 'would-be-Umayyad') without being 'would-be Muslim'. Whether or not manuscript illuminators in the north came from Christian communities in al-Andalus, they maintained links with those groups and shared books. Scholars have also argued over the ethnicity and training of craftsmen involved in the creation of 'Mozarabic' buildings, even though their techniques and designs are more often found in al-Andalus at this period. It is not feasible to see the art of the north deriving directly from Roman and Late Antique precedents without the need for highly skilled masons and sculptors who could understand, dismantle, and copy them. Such craftsmen did not exist in the north, but al-Andalus under the Umayyads was an active repository of such expertise. As skilled craftsmen had only rarely been allowed to come to the north in the previous century, the Christian buildings of the late ninth century had had to rely mostly on paint for their fictive pasts, but the masons who built the tenth century churches knew how to reuse large amounts of *spolia*, to construct horseshoe arcades and elaborate vaulting, and to sculpt capitals, screens, friezes, corbels, and chancel barriers. Córdoba provided precedents for all these highly skilled activities, and craftsmen with an Andalusí formation probably executed the northern examples. This does not mean that the art of the north could have been mistaken for that of the south, but it employed the same techniques and appreciation of the classical

past to produce distinctively ecclesiastical art. Responding to the cultural and military superiority that faced them, the northern Christians did not create a new resistant art and architecture, but attempted to claim the classical and Byzantine heritage for themselves by drawing on their local surroundings and manufacturing false pasts to bridge the centuries. Antique ruined structures, or even foundations, often provided the impetus or justification for architectural schemes in the north, but artists and agents went beyond such frameworks and projected onto them imaginative and eclectic ideas. New contacts, fresh contexts, and collaboration within new teams of craftsmen led to great invention. This chapter will concentrate on identifying historical contexts for the material labelled 'Mozarabic' in order to highlight the nature of these connections and transactions.

Al-Andalus

The inauguration of the Caliphate in Córdoba in 929 initiated a burst of artistic activity in the new city-estate of Madīnat al-Zahrā and in the Great Mosque in Córdoba.¹⁹ The Caliphate of 'Abd al-Rahmān III (r. 912-961) and that of his son al-Hakam II (r. 961-976) saw the zenith of Arabic culture in al-Andalus. In the Great Mosque, 'Abd al-Rahmān III added an extended portico with roll corbels and a new square minaret. From 961, al-Hakam II began an extravagant extension, adding twelve new bays to the south, which entailed moving the mihrab with its marble columns and capitals further towards the river.²⁰ Inscribed in a massive square section of wall, the small chamber

¹⁹ Safran, 2000.

²⁰ Ettinghausen, 2000, 127-40; *AAAS*, 1992, 11-26; Rosser-Owen, 2010, 23-25.

Figure 61 Córdoba, Great Mosque, dome of the *maqsura*

of the mihrab was flanked by two entrances, one to the left that accessed the treasury, where finely illuminated Qur'āns would have been kept, and a second to the right that led into a passageway (*sabāt*) connecting to the palace. In front of the mihrab al-Hakam II created a fantastical *maqsura*, an area reserved for the use of the caliph and privileged courtiers. Three domes crown the space, and the central dome combines a groined umbrella vault with a ribbed octagon on squinches (fig. 61). Glass mosaics, of the kind that had not been made in the peninsula since the late antique period, covered the walls around the mihrab and the octagonal dome above, for al-Hakam II was expressly invoking the Great Mosque of Damascus, where his ancestors had commissioned fine mosaics from Byzantine artists.²¹

Craftsmen came to tenth-century Córdoba from Constantinople to create patterns of stylised geometric foliate decoration, whilst a local artist may have completed the precise Arabic inscription around the mihrab's *alfiz* frame. Interlocking polylobed arches delineated the space of the *maqsura* and played with the architectural ideas of the original mosque, its tiers, alternating red and white voussoirs, and the relief carving of the Bāb al-Wuzarā. The columns were newly quarried and crowned with highly stylised Corinthian capitals.

Madīnat al-Zahrā was the place where the caliph received envoys and whence he could survey the fertile lands around Córdoba.²² The architecture of the palatial spaces both

21 Koury, 1996, 80–98.

22 For the diplomatic use of the villa or *munya*, see Anderson, 2014, 138–40.

stretched and constrained the horseshoe arch, which now often inscribed more than two-thirds of a circle. It grew in size to encompass large gateways and contracted to form perfect arcades and *ajimez* doorways. Like the mosque, the city of Madīnat al-Zahrā had more than one building phase: the planning and the first structures, c. 936-c. 955; a major transformation from c. 955; and a gradual decline after 976.²³ The second phase included the reception hall, known colloquially as the *Salon Rico*, and the rearrangement, from c. 961, of earlier buildings to create two official residences, perhaps one of them for the *hajib*, Ja'far (fig. 62). The mid-tenth-century transformation of Madīnat al-Zahrā was also notable for its marble carving. Quarries were re-opened, and sculptors cut such deep, precise, yet organic, foliate ornament that it was sometimes believed they came from Byzantium.²⁴ The most Byzantinising capitals

were Corinthian in form but with deep regular carving, sometimes called bee's nest, perhaps derived from Byzantine basketweave capitals. At Madīnat al-Zahrā the caliphs continued to indulge an appreciation of antiquarian classical pieces already exhibited in the ninth century under Muhammad I.²⁵ They collected pagan sarcophagi and freestanding sculpture, perhaps to evoke the classical taste of their Umayyad ancestors. Susana Calvo has recently argued that not only was this activity unique amongst contemporary Islamic courts and thus specific to the Umayyads, but it may have been an integral part of an intellectual environment fostered by al-Hakam II, as heir and as caliph. He surrounded himself with learned men and sent emissaries to collect scholarly texts from Baghdad and Egypt. The classical sculptures may have decorated spaces devoted to learning at Madīnat al-Zahrā, possibly the Court of Pillars and the Court of Clocks, where the mythological figures and the Muses may have constituted a revival of *paideia*, of classical learning, in a new Umayyad context.²⁶ Although we have lost nearly all the metalwork and magnificent textiles that filled the palaces, one element, ivory, has preserved some idea of the luxury of the caliph's surroundings. Given the thickness of the ivory boxes and pyxides carved in Córdoba, the tusks must have arrived in some quantity, perhaps as tribute from North Africa.²⁷ The rich figurative ornamentation applied to these objects, alongside the intricate foliate scrolls and inscriptions, gives some impression of the myriad works in other media now lost.²⁸

Figure 62 House of Ja'far, Madīnat al-Zahrā (Córdoba)



²³ Vallejo, 2010; Vallejo, 2007, 3-26; Vallejo, 2013, 89-109.

²⁴ Greenhalgh, 2009, 107-108; Vasiliev, 1950, 324-28.

²⁵ Rosser-Owen, 2009, 190-91; Ruggles, 2003, 49-50 and 87-88; Calvo, 2014, 1-33.

²⁶ Calvo, 2014, 15-33.

²⁷ This view is now questioned, though not entirely dismissed.

²⁸ Rosser-Owen, 2010, 26-8; Cutler, 2005, 37-47.

The Northern Kingdoms

The northern kingdoms could not afford ivory and gold, but they had developed their own luxurious art in manuscripts, where artists used pigments and the skins of sheep to produce works of vibrant imagination. Books were produced in two main centres: in Tábara, west of Zamora, and in Valeránica, south of Burgos (Castile), as well as other scriptoria that are harder to localise. This was the period in which many of the greatest illuminated Beatus manuscripts were produced. Three can be dated precisely through their colophons, scribal summaries of the circumstances of the

production: the Valladolid Beatus of 970 (fig. 63), the Tábara Beatus of 970, and the Girona Beatus of 975, along with five others dated by comparison between 950 and 1000. Only one fully illustrated Bible is extant (Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, León, Cod. 2), from Valeránica, produced in 960 by a scribe called Sancho. It is clear that these highly talented scribes and illuminators were well aware of one another's work, even when they lived many kilometres apart, and that artistic conversations could take place across considerable distances where the personal contacts were in place. Not being portable, the results of building projects were not as easily shared, and there is almost no

Figure 63 Valladolid Beatus (970), Biblioteca de la Universidad, MS 433, fols. 131v-131



Photograph: Archivo Oronoz

information about the masons, sculptors, and painters involved. As is usually the case, more is known about their agency and the role of men who held powerful positions in the mid-tenth century.

At the beginning of the century it might have appeared that the northern kingdoms of Spain were on an upward curve. They had taken advantage of disorder in al-Andalus, and the artistic expression of the kingdom of Asturias held great promise. Alfonso III's sons García (r. 910-913/4), Ordoño II (r. 913/14-924), and Fruela (r. 924-925) had been prepared for rule. Ordoño II may even have been sent to the *muwallad* Banū Qasī for his education, although whether this took place in Zaragoza, in La Rioja, or itinerantly, was not recorded. When Alfonso III relinquished the throne in 910, Fruela and his wife, Nunilo, donated a finely chased silver plaque to San Salvador in the old capital, Oviedo, incising an inscription around the edge to record the gift. The plaque depicts the four living creatures of Ezekiel (Ez. 1:15-21) around a cross, and was probably Carolingian in origin. García and Ordoño II established the centre of their rule further south, in León, the old Roman military headquarters of the *VII Gemina* legion. From here they had excellent communication routes to the west and the east of the peninsula along the Roman roads, and the Roman structures of León may have given them another kind of inspiration. Although a charter saying that Ordoño II gave the Roman baths of León to the bishop for a new cathedral was falsified in the twelfth century, it may nonetheless contain an element of truth and constitute a rare glimpse of the reuse of antique buildings for secular and cultic purposes.²⁹ It says that the baths had been in use as a royal palace (*aula regia*), but they now acquired three

altars, one to the Virgin and all female saints, another to the Saviour and the Apostles, and a third to St. John the Baptist and all martyrs and confessors.

Outside the cities, aristocratic churchmen began to celebrate, and even to emulate, the hermit-bishop saints of the Visigothic period.³⁰ At least that is how their memory has been crafted by the communities that have honoured them as saints. Gennadius was named bishop of Astorga around 909, but his identity was founded on more eremitic activity amidst the mountains of El Bierzo, southwest of Astorga. He is portrayed as seeking out the places where the Visigothic saint, Fructuosus, and his followers had practised their ascetic lives. The monastery of San Pedro de Montes promoted the cult of St. Gennadius, and held an inscription recording its re-foundation by him in 895.³¹ The date of the carving is uncertain, but the text says that an oratory founded by Fructuosus originally stood on the site, and was extended by Valerius, traditionally thought to be the author of the *Life of Fructuosus*. The inscription employs rhetorical language to emphasize that the foundation is a restoration, carried out 'at the expense and with the labour of the brothers', not a new monastery aiming 'to oppress' the surrounding population. It concludes by documenting Gennadius's consecration of the church in 919, with Bishop Sabaricus of Dumio, Frunimius of León, and Dulcidius of Salamanca. This kind of language was typical of the foundation charters of new monastic settlements which, in order to dispel any accusations of novelty or aggrandisement, frequently insisted on the antiquity of sites and the ruined state of previous structures.³² In this they recall the approach of Asturian

30 Carrero, 2002, 93-95.

31 Martín Viso, 2012, 165-90.

32 Bango, 1979, 319-338.

29 Collins, 2012, 140; Saéz, 1987, 59-62, doc. 39.

chroniclers and builders encountered in the previous chapter. These inscriptions were self-conscious acts of recording and indicate an acute awareness of a place in history. The phraseology is so prevalent that it may have amounted to a quasi-legal clause, designed to ensure that no one else could later lay claim to the land, and was not intended to be an accurate description. As nothing of any tenth-century structure has survived on the site, the identity of San Pedro de Montes has been built on these literary foundations. In contrast, the standing church of Santiago de Peñalba claims the burial of St. Gennadius, and rivalry between these two institutions may be behind much of the historical confusion. For example, San Pedro de Montes had a document, known as 'the will of St. Gennadius', which recounted his life in the first person, but it is likely to be a falsification and is known only in copies from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, when San Pedro de Montes was rebuilt. Sacred landscapes were also plotted further east, in Castile and Navarre. In the mountains of the Sierra de la Demanda, bordering Navarre and Castile, churchmen revived the cult of the Visigothic hermit, St. Aemilian, after Ordoño II and Sancho Garcés I of Pamplona took Nájera and Viguera. This interest in reviving sites associated with Visigothic saints was matched by the restoration of sites associated with Visigothic monarchs. San Juan de Baños with King Recceswinth, Santa María de Bamba with King Wamba and King Recceswinth, and perhaps San Román de Hornija with Recceswinth's father, Chindaswinth, could all fall within this category.³³ Both approaches had their roots in the creative historical writing of the late ninth century.

Ramiro II and Córdoba

The reign of Ramiro II (r. 931-951) was the high point of the tenth century for the northern Christian kingdoms. He had seized the throne from his more religious brother, Alfonso IV, and gone on to demonstrate the kind of military prowess respected by his subjects and by the Arabs. In 939 he won a pitched battle at Simancas, in the Duero valley, against the forces of 'Abd al-Rahmān III, when the caliph was nearly killed. The victory enabled Ramiro to range eastwards across the peninsula, almost as far as Zaragoza.³⁴ To the south he could now secure sites along the Duero, including the old Roman city of Clunia, Oca, and Osuma, as well as Salamanca, located further west on the *Via de la Plata* and above the river Tormes, a tributary of the Duero. He entrusted these to local counts who reported to him. As Gómez-Moreno was the first to propose, the victory at Simancas probably inspired Ramiro's gift of a brass and bejewelled cross to the monastery of Santiago de Peñalba in the Montes de León.³⁵ Ramiro II was closely linked to that new foundation, and his name is associated with it in documents of 937, 940, and 946. He presided over a large council in 937, which acknowledged a gift from Bishop Salomón of Astorga 'to conclude the fabric of the church'. The large number of Arab and Arabised names amongst the witnesses to the charter has led to suggestions that this council may have received ambassadors from al-Andalus.³⁶ The charter explains that the site originally planned for the church of St. James had been moved to a place more fitting for the burial of Gennadius.³⁷ Recent conservation

³⁴ Collins, 1995a, 237-38.

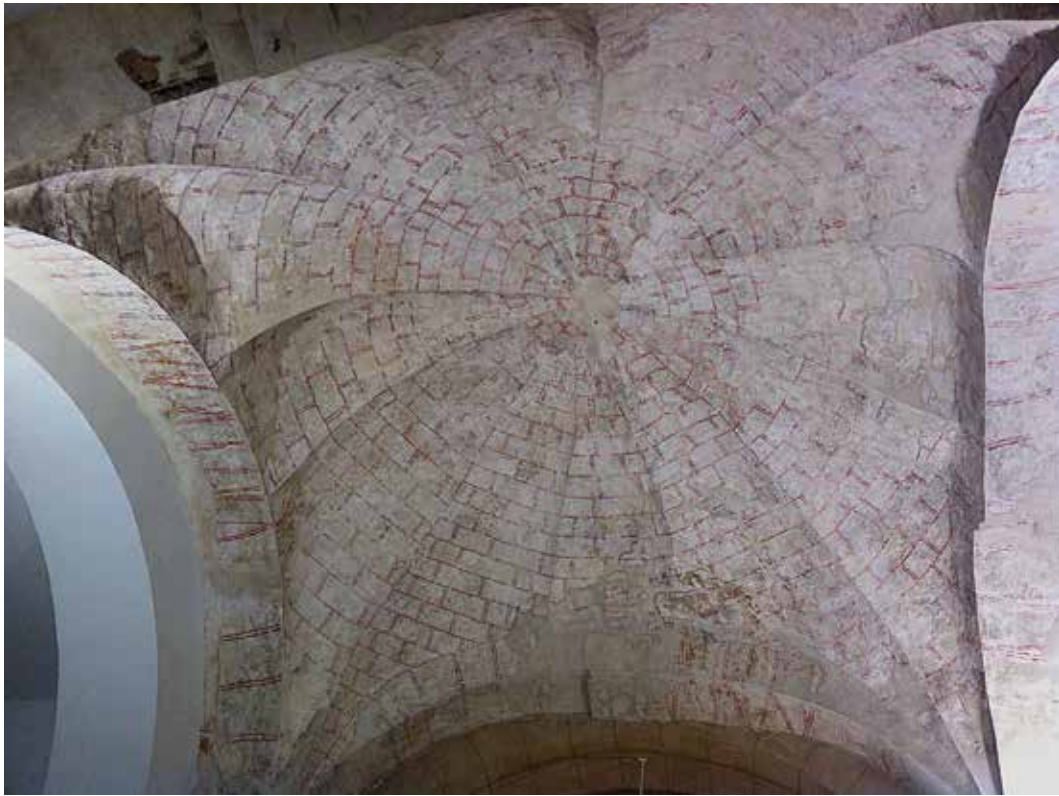
³⁵ Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 384-85.

³⁶ Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, ms. 44357; Carriedo Tejedo, 2005, 67-98; Caverio 1999, doc. 48, 97-100.

³⁷ Carrero, 2002, 96-97; Ito, 2005, 9-20.

³³ Alonso, 2007, paras. 1-36.

Figure 64 León, San Salvador de Palat del Rey, umbrella vault



Photograph: author

of the wall paintings at Santiago de Peñalba under the direction of María Suárez Inclán has revealed the incised under-drawing for an inscription in the apse. It records the consecration of the church in 937, and its dedication not only to St. James but also to St. Torquatus, St. Adrian, and the Portuguese St. Verissimus.³⁸ What is not entirely clear from these documents is how much, if any, of the fabric had been constructed before 937 and to what extent the inscription was commemorative. In any case, it is likely that this building belongs with the ambit of Ramiro II, as the king commissioned a church in León for his burial, San Salvador de Palat del

Rey (fig. 64), and that church has significant similarities with Peñalba.³⁹ His daughter, Elvira, its *domina*, may have been responsible for some aspects of the church.⁴⁰ She and her brother, Sancho the Fat, are credited with acquiring the relics of the martyr St. Pelayo for the church, by sending Bishop Velasco to Córdoba in 967.⁴¹ All this may suggest that Ramiro II encouraged innovative art, perhaps inspired by the architectural achievements of his illustrious ancestor and namesake, Ramiro I, and possibly in discussion with the distinguished envoys

³⁹ Alonso, 2007, paras. 8-10.

⁴⁰ Walker, 2001, 154.

⁴¹ Christys, 2002, 94-101.

³⁸ Guardia, 2008a, 52.

that came to his court from Córdoba in 941. His family, especially royal women, continued that association and the aspirations that went with it.⁴² Equally the agency may have come from the ecclesiastical members of his court, who were important in securing new territory and crafting the image of the king. This second period of Ramiran art introduced significant new elements that have come to define Mozarabic architecture and its ornamentation: the use of ashlar masonry; segmental groin vaulting in combination with other forms; wide and high horseshoe chancel arches; reused Roman monolith columns; horseshoe-plan apses inscribed in a square; roofs supported on roll corbels; large sculpted Corinthian capitals in marble; and division by carved chancel barriers or screens. All these elements were not present

in every church, and they were used in different combinations.

Santiago de Peñalba is a natural sacred site (*locus sanctus*) in a dramatic location amidst the white mountains that give it its name (white rock, *pena alba*) (fig. 65). Constructed in slate hewn from the local mountains, the church is built on a small terrace on a steep hillside. Peñalba is of necessity a narrow church with a single nave of two bays and two apses, one at the east and another at the west end. Small lateral rooms either side of the crossing provide additional liturgical spaces. It is generally accepted that the western apse was used for the burial of Gennadius, as tradition says that he had retired to his monastery in the mountains. The recent discovery of the possible remains of a western apse at San Salvador de Palat de Rey in León, where Ramiro

Figure 65 El Bierzo, Valle de Silencio, Santiago de Peñalba



42 Pick, 2002, 38-69; Walker, 2001, 154-55.

Figure 66 Santiago de Peñalba, south doorway

II was buried, helps to support the idea of funerary use.⁴³ The double-apsed church had never been prevalent in late antique Hispania, as it was in North Africa, but at least three examples would have been visible in al-Andalus, La Cocosa (Badajoz), San Pedro de Alcántara (Málaga), and Torre de Palma (Portugal).⁴⁴ However, the model for this unusual plan did not need to be religious, and the more widespread use of counter-apses in secular Roman buildings could have helped to inspire the design. For example, Ramiro II had occupied the old Roman city of Clunia where the baths provide one example, along with models for horseshoe or semi-circular shapes inscribed in squares. Closer to Peñalba, the foundations of a possible Roman basilica, with a semi-circular

apse, were uncovered in 2012 on the site of Teatro Gullón in Astorga.

The exterior of Peñalba is plain except for its south doorway and the long roll corbels that extend from its roofs (fig. 66). The ends of the roll corbels are decorated with daisy wheels and other geometric designs that could have been familiar from Roman funerary slabs. The double doorway (*ajimez*) is set under an *alfiz* frame, and divided by two pronounced horseshoe arches. These rest on three slender monoliths and small reused Corinthian capitals, probably from Astorga. More than any other horseshoe arches in the north, these arches recall those of the caliphal constructions at Madīnat al-Zahrā, especially those of the second phase of building found in the House of the Pool and the House of Ja'far, a comparison that suggests a date in the late 950s or the 960s. Inside, it is immediately

43 Miguel Hernández, 1996, 132–44.

44 Duval, 1992.

noticeable that the sections of the church, the two apses, the short nave, and the crossing, all have different heights. This seems to be an integral aspect of the design and not to indicate separate campaigns. Tall white and grey marble columns mark the division between the crossing and the nave, and shorter ones mark the apse and south door entrances. The capitals are homogenous with two tiers of acanthus and a double row of cord at the neckings. The sanctuary arch is a wide and high horseshoe opening enclosed by a painted *alfiz* frame. Structurally the building is notable for its use, indeed its celebration, of segmental groin vaulting. Not only does this crown the eastern and western apses, but the crossing has a highly unusual segmental groined vault, sometimes called an umbrella vault, with eight segments resting on wall ribs, which in turn taper into corbels.⁴⁵ The only analogue for this vault in the north is in the much-restored church of San Salvador de Palat del Rey in León.⁴⁶ The origins of this remarkable feature have been the object of fierce debate, in particular in the work of Bango Torviso and Torres Balbas.⁴⁷ Although it is not possible to prove the route of its arrival in the peninsula, Torres Balbas's proposal that the technique came from the mosques of Ifrīqīya (Tunisia), where it was used as early as the ninth century, still has much to recommend it. The port of Pechina, in Almería, was identified as the most likely conduit, where the same technique was used in the mosque, although the ninth-century mihrab of 'Abd al-Rahmān II in the Great Mosque of Córdoba may also have had a segmental groined vault.⁴⁸ There are Byzantine precedents but, given the number of Andalusī

visitors to León and the lack of ambassadors from Constantinople, it seems much more likely that the technical expertise required to build these vaults came from al-Andalus. Indeed, Yaquub b. Mahran, bishop of Pechina, was a member of the diplomatic corps, led by the Jewish official, Hasdai ibn Shaprut, that stayed in León for three months in 941 to negotiate the ransom of Muhammad ibn Hashim of Zaragoza.⁴⁹ The nave vault and that of the central apse have the same kind of geometric and foliate painted decoration found in some Asturian churches, which could strengthen the suggestion that some of those painted schemes represented tenth-century refurbishment. The proximity of Roman painting in Astorga may also be relevant. Although the vaults at Peñalba are not constructed of brick, two of them are painted to look as if they are made of that material, which suggests either that their model was of brick or that brick was seen as a particularly desirable material in an area where the materials or expertise to make it were not available.⁵⁰ As with the south doorway, a technique and material from al-Andalus was the object of emulation in this church. If any church merits the literal meaning of the label 'Mozarabic', it could be Santiago de Peñalba. Yet it should not be forgotten that this kind of brickwork with alternating courses of stonework was also characteristic of Byzantine architecture at this period, especially within the frame of a semi-circular arch as it appears at Peñalba.⁵¹ Thus, even if it was executed in an Andalusī idiom and most likely by craftsmen trained in al-Andalus, Byzantium may have provided the ideology behind the building. There is no need to posit a simple choice between Byzantine or Andalusī inspiration, as Córdoba explicitly

45 Utrero, 2009a, 223-27.

46 Guardia, 2007, 122-24.

47 Utrero, 2009a, 226-27.

48 Guardia, 2007, 122-27; Utrero, 2009a, 223-27; for Hasdai ibn Shaprut, see Golb, 1974.

49 Martínez Díez, 2005, 367-374.

50 Araguas, 2003.

51 Ousterhout, 1987, 127.

expressed its admiration for Byzantine art under Caliph al-Hakam II (r. 961-976), notably in the mosaics around the new mihrab in the extension to the Great Mosque. This artistic exchange was probably the culmination of such fascination and not a sudden introduction.⁵² Arab sources, albeit compiled six centuries later, recorded four visits of ambassadors to Córdoba from Constantinople between 945 and 961, during the reign of 'Abd al-Rahmān III.⁵³ Precious objects were exchanged, and the Emperor even supplied a pair of elaborate ceremonial letters listing the presents in gold Greek letters on blue-dyed parchment. The letters were presented in silver-gilt caskets, lined with brocade, ornamented with an enamel portrait of the Emperor and closed with his gold seal.⁵⁴ The evidence for official Cordoban envoys travelling to Constantinople is somewhat problematic, but return visits are likely to have been made.⁵⁵ This close contact between Byzantium and Córdoba took place during the reign of Ramiro II and into the reign of his son Ordoño III, and it would be surprising if they were not aware of this resplendent Christian presence in the peninsula.⁵⁶ After 956, no mention of any exchange of ambassadors has survived until 972, when the Byzantine Emperor, John Tzimiskes, sent envoys to Caliph al-Hakam II.⁵⁷ Given that the mosaics in the Mosque were under construction during the intervening period, there is every reason to postulate even closer connections. During the second half of the tenth century, art and

architecture in both the north and south of the peninsula continued to develop with a constant awareness of Constantinople.

San Miguel de Escalada in new contexts

It is in the context of sacred topography that the iconic building of San Miguel de Escalada should be viewed. This church stands on a raised site above the west bank of the river Esla, east of León and not far from the Roman encampment at Lancia. Like the churches of ninth-century Asturias, it is basilical in plan and the nave is built of rubble-fill with ashlar quoins. But, unlike Valdediós and other churches of Asturias, the nave arcade at Escalada is formed by slender monolithic columns of veined marble, topped by diverse Corinthian capitals (fig. 67). Together they create a highly classicised space. This is a true late antique aesthetic, a miniature version of arcaded basilicas in Rome or Ravenna. Yet the horseshoe arches that form the arcades disrupt the effect of a classical basilica. The circumference of these arches is similar to that of the tiered arches in the Great Mosque of Córdoba built under 'Abd al-Rahmān I and 'Abd al-Rahmān II. Indeed the interior of Escalada, stripped of its liturgical furnishings, is perhaps the Mozarabic building that most effectively evokes the Great Mosque of Córdoba in its re-creation of the late antique. As in the Mosque, the marble columns at Escalada, like the capitals, are mostly reused Roman *spolia*.⁵⁸ Since the columns are not all equal in height, some adjustments had to be made in the bases to provide an even arcade, as in the Mosque. These columns were also protected from subsidence or earthquake through the use of the same Byzantine technique employed in

52 Momplet, 2012; Abad Castro, 2009, 9-30.

53 Codoñer, 2004, 177-45.

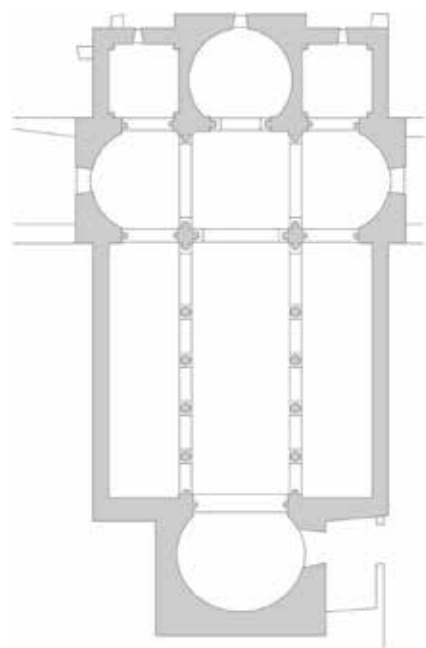
54 Soucek, 1997, 408-409.

55 Christys, 2002, 128-35.

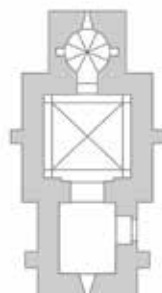
56 Ousterhout, 2008, 56; al-Maqqarī, 1967, vol.1, 374; Vasiliev, 1950, 218-19, 276-81.

57 O'Callaghan, 1975, 125; for artisans in Constantinople, see Herrin, 2013, 168-69.

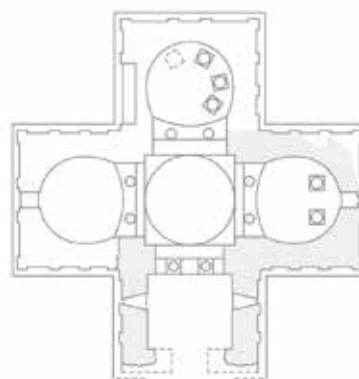
58 Noack-Haley, 1991, pl. 56, c.d.

Plans IV Plans of 'Mozarabic' churches

San Cebrián de Mazote

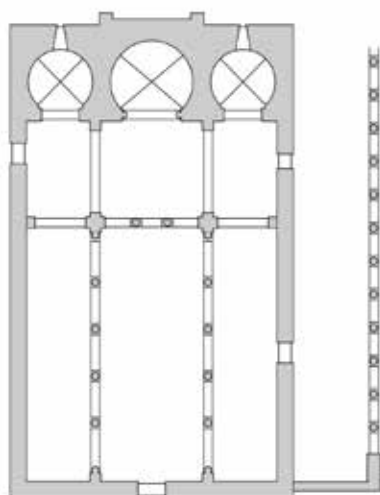


San Miguel de Celanova

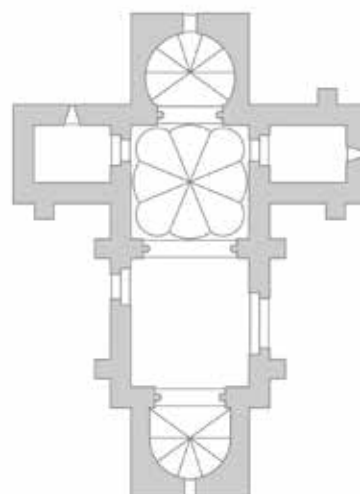


São Frutuoso de Montélios

10th century (?)
Subsequent restorations



San Miguel de Escalada



Santiago de Peñalba

Figure 67 San Miguel de Escalada (León), nave arcade

the Mosque: lead discs were inserted between the bases, shafts, and capitals in order to ease the loading in both buildings.⁵⁹ Only al-Andalus preserved this kind of technical knowledge in the peninsula. Thus, although the conception of the church may have looked to the late antique, its realisation is more likely to have relied on Andalusí expertise.

The interpretation of this building has relied heavily on the text of a foundation inscription. Now lost, but recorded at the end of the eighteenth century, like that at San Pedro de Montes, it had a distinctly rhetorical flavour.⁶⁰ It also may have been carved at a later period, and it is not even definite that the inscription belonged

to the church now known as San Miguel.⁶¹ Despite this, the inscription has been used to date the construction of the present building to the reign of Alfonso III and its consecration in 913 to that of his son, García. The same text ascribes the consecration of San Miguel to Bishop Gennadius, thus associating it with his sanctity, even though the site lay outside his diocese.

This ancient place, dedicated in honour of the archangel Saint Michael, a small structure, after falling into ruin, remained demolished for a long time, until Abbot Alfonso, coming with his companions from Córdoba, their fatherland, built up the ruined house in the time of the powerful and serene prince Alfonso. Only when the number of monks increased was this

59 Utrero, 2006a, 499; Marfil Ruiz, 1999, 181.

60 Dodds, 1990, 47-58 and 146; Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 141; García Lobo, 1982, 41-47, 64-65; Hitchcock, 2008, 60, n. 26.

61 Utrero, 2012a, 125-45.

fitting temple raised up with admirable work, enlarged in every part from the foundations. The work was finished in twelve months, not by imperial order nor by oppression of the people, but by the insistent vigilance of Abbot Alfonso and the brothers, when García held the sceptre of the realm with Queen Mumadona in era 951 [913] and consecrated by Bishop Genadius on [November 13].⁶²

The site on which the church of San Miguel was built, the ancient place (*hic locus antiquitus*), constitutes one of the main themes of this brief text. Another inscription with almost exactly the same wording, and also lost, was recorded at the monastery of San Martín de Castañeda (Sanabria, Zamora), except that the abbot was John, the king Ordoño II, and the date 921.⁶³ That building, like San Pedro de Montes, was replaced in later centuries. Excavations have indicated that an antique structure may have stood on the site of San Miguel de Escalada.⁶⁴ The function of the earlier building has not been determined, but it is likely to have been secular, for example, an agricultural store.⁶⁵ Two reused Roman stones link the building to the Leonese legion, and they are probably *spolia* from the nearby military camp at Lancia. The earlier building seems to have been divided, or remained divided, during the Visigothic period, when it may have been used as a series of rooms. It is not possible to determine if this structure was standing when the church builders arrived and, if so, whether it was used as the first church, as implied in the inscription. More crucially, how much of the surviving church

relates to the second enlarged building, apparently consecrated in 913? The church awaits a full stratigraphic study, but initial readings suggest that the present structure was built in one phase (Escalada I) and subsequently refurbished (Escalada II).⁶⁶ The core of the building is of rubble infill with ashlar quoins, not unlike the Asturian churches of San Adriano de Tuñón or San Salvador de Valdediós, a comparison that suggests continuity between the last decades of the ninth century and the first of the tenth. María de los Ángeles Utrero assigns the ashlar walls, the friezes, and the southern portico to the second phase, whilst Isidro Bango dates the refurbishment to c. 913, using a reading of the inscription. It is equally worth considering whether the decorative scheme might belong to the mid- or even late tenth century. For example, the encasing of the central and south chancel chapels in ashlar makes the units resemble San Miguel at Celanova, which I shall be dating to the 970s. The contemporary addition of segmental vaulting in the chancel chapels, and vegetal and zoomorphic friezes, likewise find analogues that may also be dated to the second half of the century, as does the internal horseshoe plan of the apses, inscribed in squares. The dating of the nave arcade and the chancel screen is more problematic. At first glance the nave arcade seems earlier as the diameter of the horseshoe arches imitates that of the eighth and ninth century campaigns in the Great Mosque of Córdoba, whereas the high chancel screen uses much more pronounced horseshoe arches. This impression is contradicted, however, by the way that the masonry of the arcade is coursed into that of the high chancel screen, indicating that the arcade of monolith columns and the screen belong together.⁶⁷ The re-erection of columns in

62 Author's translation. For the transcription of the Latin, see Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 141.

63 Dodds, 1990, 72-73.

64 San Román Fernández, 2007, 1-32; Larrén, 1986, 501-13; Bango, 2008, 38-39.

65 Salido, 2008, 105-124; Salido, 2009, 679-92.

66 Utrero, 2012a, 125-45.

67 Utrero, 2006a, 3438.

an arcade required considerable architectural expertise, which makes it more likely that its construction belonged to the second phase (Escalada II). Monoliths had always had a mystique, because of the difficulty of extracting them from quarries and the consequent expense. After the loss of the necessary expertise in late antiquity, their mystery increased.⁶⁸ The considerable skill required even for their reuse, involving dismantling, transport, and re-erection, should not be underestimated.⁶⁹ There were few precedents for this expertise in earlier Asturian monuments, where a row of columns was never used to support an arcade, but such expertise was plentiful in al-Andalus. In addition to the columns set up in the Great Mosque at Córdoba in the previous century, alternating pink puddingstone and grey marble monoliths featured in the arcades of the mosque at Madīnat al-Zahrā (c. 940) and in those of the caliph's reception hall, under construction between 953 and 956.⁷⁰ It may also be significant that the Dar al-Mulk at Madīnat al-Zahrā had elaborate sculpted wall panels with contrasting designs, perhaps emulated in the chancel barriers at San Miguel de Escalada, which likewise juxtaposed patterns, albeit much more crudely executed than those at Madīnat al-Zahrā. The chancel barrier in the south aisle is decorated with an overall geometric design of latticework and a foliate border that forms a Tree of Life, whereas the panel in the north aisle introduces birds, leaves, and a shell into the ornamental grid (fig. 68).⁷¹ Traditional Byzantine models are behind the form and decoration of these chancel barriers. For example, Sant Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna had chancel barriers decorated with

Figure 68 San Miguel de Escalada (León),
chancel barrier



affronted birds, vine scroll, and pierced designs, but the examples at Escalada are *sui generis*. Other carved plaques may have once fulfilled a similar function. Several controversial pieces could belong in this context, including two reliefs from San Miguel de Lillo (Monte Naranco), as well as the plaque removed from Santianes de Pravia, and the fragments in its sacristy with geometric and foliate carving.⁷² The fine relief panels from Saasmas (Lugo), which mix zoomorphic panels with geometric and foliate designs, fit with the taste for matching but contrasting panels, found at Madīnat al-Zahrā and at Escalada. Likewise the chancel screen reliefs from Salamanca and Zamora could once have

68 Utrero, 2012, 134.

69 Utrero 2012a, 309-23.

70 Greenhalgh, 2009, 106-107; Utrero, 2012a, 138.

71 AMS, cat. no. 77, 152-53; Anedda, 2013, 199-221.

72 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 63, 134-35.

made a pair.⁷³ A more roughly carved relief from Chelas, now in Lisbon, features addorsed lions beside a Tree of Life and, as at Lillo and Saas-mas, the space around the animals is filled with leaf motifs.⁷⁴ Some scholars see these pieces as Visigothic carvings, whilst others, including Jean-Marie Hoppe and Paulo Fernandes, have argued for a tenth-century context. The church of San Pedro de Lourosa, located south of Porto and the river Douro (Duero), not far from the Portuguese coast, has undergone extensive restoration, but can be potentially linked to Escalada through an inscription purporting to date it to 912, a high screen, now lost, and an arcade of horseshoe arches with a similar radius.⁷⁵ In addition to that at Escalada, one other high screen survives, part of the refurbishment of the Asturian church of Santa Cristina de Lena (fig. 69), perhaps replacing an earlier screen. Like that at San Miguel de Escalada, it has three openings, and the two central arches rest on *spolia*, fine marble columns of Roman or late antique manufacture with moulded bases, whilst engaged columns of lesser quality support the outer arches.⁷⁶ Corinthian marble capitals surmount the central columns, their style in sharp distinction from the abstract Ramiran capitals of the earlier structure. The whole design is highly unusual and theatrical. Stylistically the screen at Santa Cristina de Lena is very different from that at Escalada. The three openings are surmounted by two tiers of arches; the space between them is filled with masonry that is in turn pierced by five

Figure 69 Santa Cristina de Lena (Asturias), chancel screen



lattice panels. The middle panel is highlighted by two rows of small horseshoe arches, the only horseshoe arches in the building. Below the screen is what purports to be a Visigothic slab, in three pieces, with two inscriptions.⁷⁷ These inscriptions make little sense, whilst the precision of the chisel carving is more typical of the tenth-century than anything surviving from the Visigothic period. The decoration on the slabs consists of vertical rows of vine scroll, daisy wheels, crosses, and rosettes. Thus these slabs are most likely imitation *spolia*, known as *spolia in re*.⁷⁸ The motifs could have been inspired by Roman or late antique examples

73 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 6, 48-49.

74 Hoppe, 2000, 307-55; for the Chelas lions and other pieces from the Museu Arqueológico do Carmo in Lisbon, see Fernandes, 2005, 276-80.

75 Dodds, 1990, 55-56, 150 n. 38, fig. 21 and Pl. 51; Fernandes, 2008, 21-40.

76 These may have formed part of an earlier decorative scheme; see Utrero, 2006a, 458-60.

77 Arias, 2006, 220-224; Torrente, 2006, 221-38; Diego Santos, 1993, 163; Dodds, 1990, 53-54.

78 Brilliant, 1982, 2-17.

Figure 70 San Miguel de Escalada (León), frieze, central eastern chapel



on funerary stele from sites nearby. This is a particularly explicit attempt to create a false Visigothic past, using a combination of *spolia*, including a stone with a Roman inscription, and *ex profeso* neo-Visigothic work.

At Escalada, vegetal and zoomorphic string-course friezes run around the inside of the main chancel arch, over its entrance and across the top of the high chancel screen above its three horseshoe openings. Executed in stucco, these friezes form narrow inhabited foliate scrolls (fig. 70). The friezes have sometimes been taken for Visigothic *spolia*, but several factors make that unlikely, notably the stucco technique and the schematic style of the leaves that matches those carved on the capitals at the opening of the central apse. The birds, and in particular the lions, bear comparison with medallions sketched on an unfinished carpet page (fol. 3v) in the Bible of León of 920 (fig. 71). Ana Suárez's

examination of the archaeology of this Bible makes it clear that this folio was inserted: its palette and style differ noticeably from the original manuscript.⁷⁹ This means that the carpet page is undated. Small lions and birds also decorate the upper parts of some of the more compact capitals in the nave at Escalada, recalling the small beasts on the late tenth-century capitals found in the house of the Gran Capitán in Córdoba.⁸⁰ Three altar slabs, surrounded by robust foliate or geometric scrollwork in deep relief carving, record Escalada's plentiful relics. The epigraphic script varies in each case, and it is uncertain whether they belong to the same period of refurbishment.⁸¹ These alterations would have dramatically changed

79 Suárez, 2011, 195; and see Díaz y Díaz, 1983, 307-308.

80 Noack-Haley, 1991, 143-49, Pl. 24-28.

81 AMS, cat. no. 76, 151-52.

Figure 71 León, Bible of 920, Biblioteca de la Catedral, Cod. 6, fol. 3v



Image courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art

the atmosphere of the monastery, and new liturgical vessels, curtains, and other textiles doubtless accompanied them. San Miguel de Escalada was probably already the recipient of the equally rich Morgan Beatus (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 644).⁸²

Once Escalada's decoration is separated from the date of the inscription, it becomes part of a sizeable group of monuments that can be dated between the 930s, at the earliest, and c. 980, the same period in which Madīnat al-Zahrā was constructed in al-Andalus. Determining the order in which these churches were built presents considerable difficulties. Sabine

Noack-Haley has published a meticulous and comprehensive stylistic analysis of Mozarabic sculpted capitals, a phenomenon that is one of the most distinctive and virtuosic aspects of Mozarabic art.⁸³ As Noack-Haley admits, however, the majority of the capitals may be associated with only ten churches. They thus represent a burst of imported and seasoned artistic activity, not a local school that had developed gradually. Noack-Haley proposed a relative chronology, organized into six groups, based on stylistic analysis.⁸⁴ Her first group contains only the *ex profeso* capitals at San Miguel de Escalada. Some are smooth with pronounced acanthus leaves, whilst others have flat Asturian-style striated leaves with 'eyes'; occasional birds or lions echo the zoomorphic chancel barriers and frieze carving. Her second group comprises some of the most virtuosic carving found in the north: capitals from SS. Facundus and Primitivus in Sahagún (León), San Pedro de Eslonza (León), San Román de Hornija (Valladolid), and San Cebrián de Mazote (Valladolid). Her third set includes Santa María de Lebeña (Liébana, Cantabria), Santiago de Peñalba, and the portico at Escalada. The suggestion is that the carving evolved by moving toward designs that completely encircle the basket of the capital instead of defining each face. There is no doubt about the differences between the capitals, but the extent to which these constitute an evolution, and not the work of different sculptors, is unclear. If Mozarabic churches were built or refurbished intensively over fifty years, between c. 930 and c. 980, it would not be surprising if the artistic conversation between them was unpredictable. Much would have depended on the resources of the patrons and on the availability of suitable sites, materials, and craftsmen. Kings,

⁸³ Noack-Haley, 1991, 108-11.

⁸⁴ Noack-Haley, 1991, 58, 96-100.

⁸² Williams, 1994b, 21-33.

Figure 72 San Juan de Baños (Palencia), nave arcade

lay aristocrats, bishops, and abbots expressed their particular perspectives through their architectural projects. Sites, ideally ones with sacred or royal associations, were reinvented by craftsmen with a range of Andalusí expertise. As in al-Andalus, they reused Roman material alongside new work. This was a time of great experimentation and innovation, which is not easily categorized. I shall not attempt to suggest a chronological sequence, but will highlight particular features, and, where possible, likely patrons. The masons and their teams remain anonymous.

San Juan de los Baños and Santa María de Bamba

As Jerrilynn Dodds noted, the arcade at Escalada resembles that in San Juan de Baños (Palencia)

(fig. 72). She used this comparison to argue in favour of San Juan de Baños being the Visigothic model for the architect of San Miguel de Escalada.⁸⁵ But it is equally possible, in line with the structural analysis of Luis Caballero, that San Juan de Baños was more or less contemporary with San Miguel de Escalada, which could also explain their similarities.⁸⁶ San Juan de Baños fell into ruins in the mid-nineteenth century, and was restored at the end of that century and again from 1950, after which it was declared a National Monument.⁸⁷ Evidence for prior Roman and Visigothic use of this site is set out in chapter 3, notably the inscription that names King Recceswinth and gives a date of 661, but here I wish to concentrate on the arguments for a

⁸⁵ Dodds, 1990, 50–51.

⁸⁶ Caballero, 1998, 181–242.

⁸⁷ Soraluze, 2008, 243–44.

tenth-century date and a thus 'Mozarabic' or neo-Visigothic categorization. San Juan de Baños is a triumph of invention, for it has convinced scholars of its Visigothic origin for generations. This is not surprising since the whole edifice presents itself as a Visigothic foundation, with prominent Roman, and possibly Visigothic, *spolia*. The nave arcade rests on reused Roman columns, possibly with many original capitals, which are more standardized than those at Escalada and support classically moulded impost blocks. The character of the church relies greatly on these monoliths, with two of a distinctive grey-grained marble flanking the central apse; considerable expertise would have been required to relocate them. The columns, capitals, and impost blocks probably came from one Roman building, either nearby or in Palencia. The surviving central chancel chapel is framed by a large horseshoe arch, more pronounced than those of the arcade, as at Escalada, but here the horseshoe forms the profile of the barrel vault that covers the chapel. The untidiness of the masonry breaks around this chapel is difficult to decode because of the number of later interventions.

The whole church is bound together by a narrow stringcourse frieze of repeated four-petal flowers. The fragmentary nature of the frieze has led scholars to identify it as Visigothic *spolia*, but it is more plausible as decoration of the second half of the tenth century, with designs that imitate examples from different media in the antique and late antique periods. Size, condition, and detailing all cast doubt on its Visigothic origin, as well as its application on the walls, since geometric sixth-century carving was mostly applied to panels of liturgical furniture or specific architectural features.⁸⁸ In contrast, the stringcourse frieze was used in tenth-century al-Andalus, and in Middle Byzantine architecture, to unite architectural

spaces, both inside and out. A closer examination of the precise execution of the Baños four-petal motif shows that it runs under a narrow moulding, also not typical of Visigothic-period architectural decoration. The insertion of schematic trefoil leaves between the petals further distinguishes the carving at San Juan de Baños from possible sixth-century work at Barcelona, although it can be found at Badajoz, which could argue for an early date for the frieze or for a late date for the pilasters at Badajoz. The inscription that records the foundation of the church is now displayed prominently over the chancel arch, but it obscures the frieze and accords more closely with later antiquarian practice than any decoration known from the Visigothic or early medieval periods. Overall the aesthetic of this church diverges from the more basilican Early Christian references of Escalada, and through its emphasis on heavier barrel vaulting creates a space that resonates with Asturian churches, perhaps considered more suitable for a site connected to a monarch. This re-creation of a church of Recceswinth fits with the historical interests of the kings of León in the tenth century, when other sites were linked to the burials of Visigothic kings, in particular Santa María de Bamba with Wamba and San Román de Hornija with Recceswinth's father, Chindaswinth.⁸⁹ This interest in reviving sites with royal Visigothic associations was matched by the restoration of sites associated with Visigothic hermits, and both had their roots in historical writing of the late ninth century. None of these sites was secure from raids before 939, which suggests that their development may have occurred later. After 939, King Ramiro II entrusted the region around San Juan de Baños, together with an additional thin strip that ran north-south, to the Castilian, Count Ansur Fernández. Ansur

88 For a contrary view see Utrero, 2012b, 320.

89 Alonso, 2007.

probably died soon after, and the county passed to his son, Fernando Ansúrez II, who held it as Count of Monzón, Peñafiel, and Campos until his death in 978.⁹⁰ We know that he sent embassies to Córdoba in 971 and 974, and that his sister Teresa married King Sancho I of León, and was the mother of Ramiro III. It is impossible to be certain that Fernando Ansúrez had any involvement with San Juan de Baños, but it seems highly likely given his royal connections and that his widow, Toda, had oversight of the nearby area of Dueñas.⁹¹ In summary, I am inclined to conclude that San Juan de Baños may have grown out of a Roman site that was minimally adapted in the Visigothic period, and was reconstructed – indeed re-imagined – in the tenth century as a neo-Visigothic building.

Santa María de Bamba, a site associated with two Visigothic kings, Recceswinth and Wamba, may also belong to the mid-tenth century. Gómez-Moreno cites sources that associate the foundation of the church with the retirement of Bishop Fruminio of León and give dates ranging from 928 to 953.⁹² The nave of the church was much altered in the twelfth century, but the tenth-century choir and the triple barrel-vaulted apses are mostly intact. All the arch openings to the apses were horseshoe, as were the wide and high arches of the aisles and crossing. The fabric of Bamba was not richly endowed and there are no marble *spolia* columns or marble capitals, beyond an isolated white marble capital of uncertain provenance now used as a piscina. Instead the scheme seems to have depended on some inventively carved capital friezes (fig. 73), and possibly on wall paintings, although those that survive probably belong to the twelfth century.⁹³ Both

Figure 73 Santa María de Bamba (Valladolid), capital frieze



the trefoils and the downturned leaves carved on the capital friezes can be compared with the decorative treatment of capitals at Santiago de Peñalba around the same time. Bamba also had significant similarities with San Miguel de Escalada, as originally it too had a high screen.⁹⁴

Mozarabic capitals

The finest carving in this period is found on marble capitals, perhaps because the capital represented the greatest challenge for a talented sculptor. The geographic spread suggests work undertaken mainly at sites with royal associations, which would fit with the idea that the

⁹⁰ Martínez Díez, 1987, 245-74.

⁹¹ Martínez Díez, 2005, 542.

⁹² Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 194-96.

⁹³ Martín-González, 1966, 435-36.

⁹⁴ Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 198-99.

Figure 74 Sahagún, SS. Facundus and Primitivus (Museo de las Madres Benedictinas, Sahagún), capital



craftsmen came from al-Andalus as part of diplomatic liaison. Two exceptional pieces survive, one from Hornija and a second from Sahagún (fig. 74). They are remarkable for their size (height: 52 cm) and for the precision and depth of the sharp-edged chisel carving.⁹⁵ Lobes of fleshy acanthus curl over to show their smooth undersides, whilst the upper sides are deeply drilled to pick out the leaf forms and tendrils. Flame-like leaves emerge from fluted caulicoli, and a band of simple guilloche runs below the abacus. The monastery of SS. Facundus and Primitivus at Sahagún, strategically located on the Roman road between León and Burgos, was to have long-lasting royal associations. Documents from the time of Alfonso III, not without their sceptics, assert that it was re-founded in the early years of the tenth century by an Abbot Alfonso who had come from Córdoba. The cult of the eponymous martyrs may date from the same period.⁹⁶ Gómez-Moreno noted Ramiro

II's interest in Sahagún from 935 onwards and a document that included a donation for the reparation of the church.⁹⁷ Nothing of the tenth-century fabric is now visible above ground, but eight marble capitals either remain in the town or have Sahagún as their recorded provenance.⁹⁸ Despite variations in the size of the baskets, they form a coherent set. All the capitals have two tiers of prominent fleshy leaf lobes and cord neckings, mostly in the double herringbone pattern. The leaves have smooth undersides with simple incised veins, but sharp-edged chisel carving and delicate drilling on the upper side. Other features appear in more than one capital: a band of bead and reel decoration under the abacus; fluting on caulicoli and small volutes. The capitals from San Pedro de Eslonza, a monastery associated, like Escalada, with García I, are of a similar quality and have also been dispersed. Some scholars think that the capitals on the portico at Escalada once belonged to the nearby house of Eslonza.⁹⁹ The thirteen capitals of the portico at Escalada have certainly provoked much debate, as they are of very high quality, but vary in size and some have a cut-away fourth side, which suggests that they were originally placed against a wall or pier; either way they fit their columns neatly.¹⁰⁰ Those attributed to Hornija are equally problematic and do not form a clear set.

The largest set of marble capitals in Noack-Haley's second group is *in situ* at San Cebrián de Mazote (fig. 75), a large church in the Duero valley, west of Valladolid and north of Bamba. Although the chisel carving on these capitals is not as deep as at Sahagún, several familiar characteristics recur, notably herringbone cord neckings, pronounced leaf lobes, and bands of

⁹⁵ AMS, 1993, cat. no. 61, 133.

⁹⁶ Senra, 2011b, 248-50, 260-62; Pérez Gil, 2010, 12-14.

⁹⁷ Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 204.

⁹⁸ Noack-Haley, 1991, 135-39, pl. 17-19.

⁹⁹ Dodds, 1990, 146 n. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Domingo, 2009, 265-71.

Figure 75 San Cebrian de Mazote (Valladolid), capital



bead and reel below the abaci. Unusual features include the use of cording on three capitals to form volutes, and more widely the replacement of the fleuron with a shell motif or fluting. There is almost no documentary evidence to provide a background for this church. A privilege of 952, concerning the fishing rights of the monastery of San Martín de Castañeda, mentioned in passing that the brothers used to live in 'Mouzoute'. On the basis of this document Gómez-Moreno argued that immigrant monks founded San Cebrián de Mazote in the second decade of the tenth century, around the same time as San Miguel de Escalada.¹⁰¹ But 'Mouzoute' may not be Mazote, and even if it is, monks clearly stayed

at Mazote.¹⁰² When evaluating the fabric, it is important to bear in mind extensive restoration in the nineteenth century, in the 1930s, the 1940s, and again, after a fire, in the 1980s.¹⁰³ The central horseshoe chapel was rebuilt in accordance with Gómez-Moreno's reconstruction in 1919. The restorer, Francisco Iñiguez, constructed the cimborium and rebuilt parts of the arcades in the 1940s. Even the most recent restoration may have raised the vaults above their original level. Mazote now stands as a church with a three-aisled nave of horseshoe arches that rest on reused Roman columns (fig. 76). To this extent it recalls Escalada, except that the arches of the arcade describe tighter circles, closer to those of Escalada's screen than its arcade, and thus more in common with the arcades of the second phase of Madīnat al-Zahrā. In other respects, however, Mazote seems to have more in common with Santiago de Peñalba, to judge from its double-apsed plan and the way that

Figure 76 San Cebrián de Mazote (Valladolid)



¹⁰¹ Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 173-74.

¹⁰² Dodds, 1990, 150, n. 36.

¹⁰³ Soraluze, 2008, 252-53.

shorter monolith columns determine the height of the arches in the side aisles. The aspect that distinguishes Mazote from the other Mozarabic churches is its salient transept with curved lateral walls. Not only did this space support a vaulted crossing on square pillars with engaged columns, but the walls at the end of each arm are curved. On the north side alternating red and white voussoirs are painted over the doorway, as on the nave wall at Peñalba, perhaps in imitation of the Great Mosque in Córdoba or to evoke local Roman *opus mixtum*. It is difficult to find analogues for Mazote's transept. A similar plan can be seen in the transverse narthex at the Myrelaion church (Bodrum Camii), built by Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos, co-ruler with Constantine Porphyrogenitus VII, before 922, in Constantinople, or in the porticoes of early churches in Milan or Ravenna.¹⁰⁴ Such comparisons may go back ultimately to the plans of Roman public buildings and villas, a more likely source of inspiration for Mazote.

Noack-Haley identified two sets of capitals that embody a late flowering of Mozarabic carving: the first in the portico at San Miguel de Escalada and the second at the church of Santa María de Lebeña in the Cantabrian mountains (fig. 77). At the Cantabrian church, the acanthus leaf carving dissolves into a lattice band and two capitals have pointed leaf lobes that curl with an organic, almost liquid, plasticity. For Noack-Haley, this is the culmination of a process seen in the portico at Escalada where the acanthus leaves that encircle the basket of the capital begin to read as a continuous horizontal band. On the exterior, Lebeña has a plethora of roll corbels, some restored, that develop designs found at Santiago de Peñalba, as well as inventive geometric friezes that run below the projecting roof. Tensions between the plan and elevation of the small church of

Figure 77 Santa María de Lebeña (Asturias), capital



Lebeña have continued to puzzle scholars. In plan it can be seen as a three-aisled basilica with a tripartite east end and two lateral rooms at the west end flanking an original entrance. In elevation, it seems more like a cross-in-square. The disposition of its piers, the transverse tunnel vaulting in the aisles, and the parallel diaphragm vaulting in the much taller nave turns it into a more disorienting space.¹⁰⁵ This has led to comparisons not only with Byzantine crossings, for example, the Myrelaion church in Constantinople, but also with small nine-bay Andalusí mosques like Bāb al-Mardūm (999) and las Tornerías in Toledo,

¹⁰⁴ Ousterhout, 2008, 16–23.

¹⁰⁵ Soraluze, 2008, 253–55: there were alterations during the early modern period and restorations at the end of the nineteenth century.

and earlier examples in North Africa.¹⁰⁶ Lebeña lacks the domes characteristic of the other buildings but nonetheless conveys something of their sense of space. Its participation in this architectural dialogue supports the other indications that place it late in the sequence of Mozarabic buildings. Santa Maria de Lebeña is usually associated with Alfonso, Count of Liébana, and his wife, Justa, who appear in documents between 924 and 963. As Jerrilynn Dodds suggested, this building may fit better with the later years of Alfonso's life.¹⁰⁷ There is no reason why the church could not date from the late 960s or even into the 970s, when well-connected members of the Banū Gómez family held the county in addition to their lands around Saldaña (Palencia). Gómez Díaz (c. 960-980) was brother-in-law of García Fernández, Count of Castile, who went to Córdoba as an ambassador in 971, and Gómez Díaz went himself in 973.¹⁰⁸ Gómez Díaz's daughter was to marry the young king, Ramiro III.¹⁰⁹ Either way, a family context, with aristocratic and Andalusí connections, is likely for this church, as it is for many of these buildings.

Burgos, La Rioja and Álava

Another lay aristocratic milieu may help to explain a group of churches around Burgos, in La Rioja and in Álava. Defined above all by one feature, a dome on pendentives, these buildings also reused Roman masonry.¹¹⁰ Although

they are usually assigned to the early ninth century, it is possible that they fit better as products of the mid-tenth. The dating of this group has relied on matching documentary and epigraphic evidence with archaeological analysis at San Román de Tobillas (Álava), a proposition discussed in the previous chapter. Here I shall suggest that the epigraphy, the inscription of 939, could relate to the first phase of the church.¹¹¹ The inscription mentions the renovation of the church of San Román by a priest called 'Vigila', whose profession as a monk was recorded at San Pedro and San Pablo de Tejada in 931. Significantly, the ceremony was witnessed by Ramiro II, Counts Gonzalo and Fernán González of Castile, seven bishops, and nine abbots. This puts Vigila and San Román within the ambit of the Leonese king and his innovative churchmen, an association that may be explained if Vigila was the son of Munio Vigilani, Count of Álava. Given the dramatic umbrella domes at Santiago de Peñalba and San Salvador de Palat del Rey, both associated with Ramiro II, these more modest but nonetheless structural examples in Álava, La Rioja, and Burgos may represent an attempt to emulate León. Whilst not exhibiting the segmental domes of the Leonese churches, this group made its own experiments with domes, as might be expected of buildings associated with independent aspirational counts. Both of the Ramiran churches came to be associated with privileged burials, and a tomb was also cut into the floor of the sanctuary chapel, on the north side of the altar, at San Román de Tobillas. It has been argued that the burial could be that of the early ninth-century benefactor, Avitus, and that remains possible,

and Quintanilla de las Viñas; La Rioja: Santa María de los Arcos in Tricio, Santa Coloma and Santa María de Ventas Blancas; and San Román de Tobillas (Álava).

¹¹¹ Larrea, 2007, 330-31.

¹⁰⁶ Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 270-71; Dodds, 1990, 92; Utrero, 2006a, 226-27.

¹⁰⁷ Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 267-69; Dodds, 1990, 162, n. 30.

¹⁰⁸ al-Rāzī, 1967, 174.

¹⁰⁹ Ceballos-Escalera, 2000, 133-35.

¹¹⁰ Utrero, 2009a, 230: around Burgos: Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de San Vicente del Valle; San Felices de Oca, San Pedro de Arlanza, Santa Cecilia de Barriosuso

but the occupant of the tomb could also be a count of Álava.¹¹² This dating fits with Roger Collins's conclusion that ecclesiastical organisation developed in this area only in the tenth century.¹¹³ It also puts these churches into the period when Álava's neighbour, Queen Tota (*Tuta bint Asnar*) of Pamplona, concluded a treaty with 'Abd al-Rahmān III in 933.¹¹⁴ The second archaeological phase of Tobillas could be a late tenth-century, or even early eleventh-century, rebuilding for which no documentary evidence survives, perhaps to coincide with the moment in which it was incorporated into the property holdings of San Salvador de Oña, in 1011. According to tradition, Fernán González was buried at San Pedro de Arlanza, another of the churches in this group, alongside his wife, Sancha, in two reused Roman sarcophagi, now found at Covarrúbias.¹¹⁵ His contemporary, Fernando Ansúrez, died in 978, and another Roman sarcophagus, found at Husillos by the eleventh century, has been associated with him.¹¹⁶ An early Christian sarcophagus, perhaps Aquitanian from the sixth century, has been linked to the burial of Count Osorio Gutiérrez at the Galician monastery of Villanueva de Lorenzana.¹¹⁷ These funerary choices almost certainly emulated the burial of Ramiro II, who was buried in a Roman sarcophagus at San Salvador de Palat del Rey in León. Fine Roman sarcophagi were also reused by the caliphs at Madīnat al-Zahrā, but as marble basins and not for burial.¹¹⁸

Rosendo and the Northwest

Galician aristocrats were also significant proponents of 'Mozarabic' architecture. Prominent among these was Bishop Rosendo (907-977) who, like his uncle before him, held the Galician see of Mondoñedo with Dumio (c. 923-c. 942), and towards the end of his life that of Iria-Compostela.¹¹⁹ His grandfather, Hermenegildo Gutiérrez, had been a loyal supporter of Alfonso III, and he was related to the contemporary Leonese royal family through his aunt, Elvira Menéndez. She had been the wife of Ordoño II, and his cousin, Adosinda Gutiérrez, was Ramiro II's queen.¹²⁰ Another Elvira, regent and aunt of Ramiro III from 967, also received support from the bishop.¹²¹ Rosendo was a contemporary of Caliph al-Hakam II. He was eight years older and died one year after the caliph, and they inhabited the same cultural world. Rosendo was called on twice to govern territory on behalf of Ordoño III or Ramiro III. According to his twelfth-century hagiographer, Ordoño of Celanova, Rosendo even organised armies against al-Andalus and repulsed a Viking raid, although contemporary evidence for this is lacking.¹²² He founded the monastery of San Pedro de Celanova in Galicia, which became a major centre of wealth and power.¹²³ Ordoño says that Rosendo retired there in 977 and died very shortly afterwards; he was buried in a Roman sarcophagus placed on the outside of the chapel dedicated to St. Peter, possibly in an arcosolium.¹²⁴ Almost nothing survives of that large church, but in the grounds of the

112 García-Collado, 2013, 131-36.

113 Collins, 1990, 156.

114 Anderson, 2014, 24.

115 Moralejo, 1984, 189-91.

116 Moralejo, 1984, 189.

117 Moráis Morán, 2013, 303-306.

118 Calvo, 2012, 131-60; Calvo, 2014, 3-8 and 10.

119 Carrero, 2002, 94.

120 Portass, 2013, 298-302.

121 Pick, 2002, 46-52.

122 Sánchez Pardo, 2010b, 70-71; Dozy, 1987, 48-49; Christys, 2015, 85-86.

123 Sánchez Pardo, 2010a, 155-78.

124 Carrero, 2002, 95.

Figure 78 San Miguel de Celanova (Ourense)

monastery an oratory dedicated to St. Michael (fig. 78) is linked to Rosendo's brother, Froila, by an undated inscription and by a reference in the 942 dedication charter of San Pedro de Celanova.¹²⁵ This clause provides for liturgical commemoration in the form of a mass of St. Michael the Archangel for Rosendo's beloved brother, Froila. The date of this document has often been used as a *terminus ante quem* for Froila's death. However, as Díaz y Díaz noted, Froila witnessed the charter, and indeed was alive in 977 when he also confirmed Rosendo's will.¹²⁶ The charter of 942 lists liturgical commemoration for their father, who was already dead, and refers to a monument for him. But it

also prescribes arrangements for their mother, Ilduara, and for Rosendo himself, both of whom were definitively alive. It is possible that Froila was particularly honoured as a patron of the monastery because he had provided the land six years earlier in 936.¹²⁷ The verse of the inscription reads as if it derives from a charter in its reference to the unworthy (*indigno*) Froila, so it is possible that it records a lost document in which Froila stipulated the method of his *memoria*. In 938, Ilduara and Rosendo gave a large collection of textiles, vestments, and liturgical vessels to Celanova in a document that uses exceptionally rich Arabised language, which may say something about the style of the gifts.¹²⁸ Nuñez Rodríguez has proposed that the chapel should be dated to the 960s, but there is no reason why it could not have been built in the 970s, shortly before Rosendo's death in 977.¹²⁹ The function of the building is also uncertain. Suggestions have included an oratory for guests or a chapel with a processional role in the Easter liturgy linked to the small outcrop close by, which might have functioned symbolically as Golgotha.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, a memorial use for the chapel seems most likely, given its size, its dedication to St. Michael the Archangel and psychopomp, and the nature of the inscription.¹³¹

This tiny oratory is exquisite (8.5 x 3.85 x 6m). Unlike the buildings so far considered in this chapter, its masonry is formed of finely carved granite ashlar. It was probably cut and laid by masons trained in al-Andalus, although there is also evidence of the involvement of masons using different methods of construction

¹²⁵ Ordoño de Celanova, 1990, 143.

¹²⁶ Ordoño de Celanova, 1990, 143, 255-60.

¹²⁷ Ordoño de Celanova, 1990, 237-41.

¹²⁸ Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 242-43; Varela, 2001, 255-86.

¹²⁹ Nuñez Rodríguez, 1989, 25.

¹³⁰ Singul, 2007, 146-54.

¹³¹ Guardia, 2007b, 140.

and measurement.¹³² Whether the blocks were quarried for the purpose or reused remains uncertain. On the exterior, the three volumes of the building are clearly visible. The central nave is the largest section, articulated by eight-lobed roll corbels with chiselled rosettes and daisy wheels, like those at Peñalba, whilst the narthex and the east apse are lower and smaller. A narrow saw-tooth frieze runs around the gable of the apse. This exiguous structure is unique amongst surviving buildings for this period in the peninsula, so it is difficult to know what might have inspired it. One possibility is the contemporary Byzantine taste for reliquaries or containers for the Eucharist in the form of miniature buildings.¹³³ San Miguel de Celanova certainly shares the same pleasure in miniaturisation.¹³⁴ The visitor is led from the tiny narthex through a horseshoe opening into the wider and higher nave, from which the minuscule sanctuary apse can be seen through an even smaller horseshoe arch, and beyond it a splayed horseshoe window (fig. 79). The apse is horseshoe in plan, inscribed in a square, as at Santiago de Peñalba. Each of the spaces is vaulted by a different method. The apse has a segmental groin vault with eight sections, like that at Peñalba; the nave has a groin vault with ribs coming down to meet formerets, which resolve into roll corbels resembling those of the Great Mosque of Córdoba; the narthex is barrel-vaulted. Specific technical details point to the involvement of Andalusí craftsmen, in particular the way that the intrados and extrados of the horseshoe arch do not run in parallel, but the height of the voussoirs increases towards the top of the arch. This

¹³² Vázquez Rozas, 2006, 5-17; Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 246-47.

¹³³ For example, *Treasures of Heaven*, 2011, no.55, 118; Ousterhout, 1997, 460.

¹³⁴ Barral Rivadulla, 2009, 109-10.

Figure 79 San Miguel de Celanova (Ourense), interior spaces



feature appeared, perhaps for the first time, in the main reception hall of the caliph at Madinat al-Zahrā (953-957). The building at Celanova may be small, but no attention to detail was spared, even if painted stucco, not carving, was used for the decoration. Lines, drawn in red-ochre, represent stones on the nave vault. The fictive masonry extends across the substantial wall ribs, onto the upper walls of the nave and into the four windows where it indicates voussoirs that reach deep into the splays. The whole effect has been compared to the brick vault of Santa Comba de Bande, although the painted stones of Celanova are wider than the actual bricks used at Santa Comba de Bande. The sanctuary entrance has been compared to the Bāb al-Wuzarā at the Great Mosque of Córdoba for the form of its horseshoe arch and

for the simple *alfiz* frame that is painted around the sanctuary entrance. The other model traditionally proposed is Santiago de Peñalba, and it may be that Rosendo's family was alluding to the burial site of Gennadius, and perhaps to that of the kings of León in San Salvador de Palat del Rey. Celanova has also been likened to the mihrab niche of al-Hakam II (965) in the extension to the Great Mosque and, by implication, to the mid-ninth century niche, which was moved and partly preserved in that new configuration. This kind of comparison forms the basis of Jerrilynn Dodds's argument in favour of Christian sanctuaries influencing the design of al-Hakam's mihrab.¹³⁵ Although the resemblance between the sanctuary of San Miguel and the Cordoban mihrab is not in doubt, it is much more likely that artistic ideas flowed in the other direction via the Andalusi craftsmen who may well have worked on Celanova. If San Miguel de Celanova is dated towards the end of the lives of Rosendo and his brother, Froila, c. 970, when one might expect them to be making more urgent provision for their *memoria*, there is no longer any problem with the mihrab of the Great Mosque taking the artistic lead. Any Christian inspiration in the design of the mihrab probably came from Byzantium with the mosaicists.¹³⁶ The spectacular outcome of the Caliphate's intensive artistic conversation with Constantinople might well have motivated the Christian nobles of Galicia to craft their own response to Byzantium.

During the early years of his career, Rosendo had been bishop of Mondoñedo and Dumio, an association that could elucidate the small Byzantinising building of São Frutuoso de Montélios (Portugal). This unusual structure of fine cut ashlar has long been compared to the mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna,

and therefore dated to the Visigothic period.¹³⁷ Although the comparison is understandable when looking at the articulation of the exterior, it dissolves on the inside. Given Bishop Gennadius and Bishop Salomón's interest in restoring sites associated with St. Fructuosus in the Montes of León at Peñabla and San Pedro de Montes, it is easy to see the appeal of St. Fructuosus's monastery and his supposed mausoleum for Rosendo. Although larger than San Miguel de Celanova, this structure nonetheless concentrates its reused material into a small space. The granite ashlar, as finely laid as that at Celanova, probably came from Roman constructions in Braga or nearby. Six of the eight marble columns that supported the centre of the aedicule survive, also *spolia* (fig. 80). Originally tight arcades of such monoliths may have run around the inside of each apse. The chapel was extensively restored in the early 1930s. São Frutuoso de Montélios draws on many of the features already identified in this survey of 'Mozarabic' buildings, but combines them in a new way. In plan it is cruciform comprising three apses with horseshoes inscribed in squares, and a fourth side that now functions as an entrance. The piers that support the central dome are decorated with continuous capital friezes, recalling those at Bamba, but here delicately drilled.¹³⁸ Four arches stretch across the spaces between the piers; they are filled in turn with small tripartite horseshoe arches, supported on slim reused columns. The effect is to screen the small apses and the entrance and to highlight the central space under the dome. The whole structure was probably vaulted, although the current covering is the result of restoration. Residual brick pendentives indicate a central domical vault of some

¹³⁵ Dodds, 1990, 99–109; *AAAIIS*, 1992, 21.

¹³⁶ Grabar, 1992, 583–91.

¹³⁷ Dodds, 1990, 125–26 and fn. 64; Fernandes, 2009, 247–49.

¹³⁸ Krautheimer, 1986, 103, 404–15.

Figure 80 São Frutuoso de Montélios (Braga), interior



kind, whilst the western arm had a barrel vault, and the three apses hemispherical vaults.¹³⁹ São Frutuoso de Montélios is also less insistently indebted to Andalusí building traditions and, perhaps through the choice of form or the nature of an earlier structure on the site, realises a more Byzantine aesthetic than Celanova, more akin to Escalada. This Byzantinising taste, which the Galician and Leonese aristocracy shared with other European elites, came to a culmination in the peninsula under Ramiro III when, in 974, the king styled himself *basileus*, in imitation of the Byzantine emperor and of Otto I of Germany.

The church of San Torcuato at Santa Combe de Bande (Ourense) continues to be regarded

as a mix of Visigothic and late ninth-century campaigns. The monastery had been associated with Dumio (Braga), but by the middle of the tenth century, it was the subject of a dispute, c. 956, settled by Bishop Rosendo.¹⁴⁰ One of the claimants was Rosendo's cousin, Guntruda, and the other was a monk called Odoíno who said he had inherited the monastery in a ruined state (*exqualido*) from a relative, who had been given it in turn around 872 as part of Alfonso III's settlement distribution, and that it had been rebuilt 'from the foundations' (*a fundamentis*).¹⁴¹ Rosendo had supported Odoíno's claim, and by 982 Odoíno was saying that he had donated the churches to Celanova.¹⁴² St. Torquatus was believed to be one of the first seven apostles who came from Palestine to evangelize the peninsula, and his hagiography says that he became bishop of Guadix in the province of Granada. His cult was later fostered at San Pedro de Celanova alongside that of St. Rosendo. The record of the dispute over Bande has led generations of scholars to look for two phases in the building, one from the Visigothic period and a second rebuilding c. 872. However, it is equally possible that Odoíno's statement was rhetorical, another example of the need to describe a site as ancient and ruined before building on it, and not a reliable indicator of the date of construction. Luis Caballero, Fernando Arce, and María de los Ángeles Utrero have carried out a thorough stratigraphic study of the fabric and concluded that there was only one major building campaign and that, although interventions could be detected on the exterior, the interior was remarkably intact.¹⁴³ This concords with the view of Puig i Cadafalch, but is at variance with other scholars including

¹³⁹ Caballero, 2005, 177.

¹⁴⁰ Davies, 2007, 36-40.

¹⁴¹ Kingsley, 1979, 34-39.

¹⁴² Bango, 1979, 323; Sáez, 2000, 191-201.

¹⁴³ Caballero, 2003a, 69-73; Utrero, 2010, 10-12.

Jerrilynn Dodds and Karen Kingsley.¹⁴⁴ But when could that single building campaign have taken place?

If the visual effect of the robust reused masonry is set to one side, the church of Santa Comba de Bande has much in common with other tenth-century churches and, like them, has its own innovative distinguishing features. Bande is a small, long, narrow church with two lateral arms to provide additional liturgical space, and another room added later at the northeast corner, now the sacristy. One of the side spaces holds a white marble sarcophagus, traditionally linked to the body of St. Torquatus, although its date of arrival in the church is unrecorded. As the lateral rooms are open to the nave, the effect is of a cruciform church of

the Byzantine type, except that, as at Lebeña, there is no dome at the crossing. Bande has a narrow entrance, a sanctuary with a horseshoe opening, and a high nave lit by windows. There is no fictive vaulting here, as real brick barrel vaults on semi-circular arches cover the aisles, and a brick groin vault spans the nave (fig. 81). Bricks are also used as voussoirs around the window arches. A narrow band of cable decoration defines the lower edge of the vaulted space. Although thermoluminescence tests date the bricks to the seventh or eighth century, such tests depend for their interpretation on comparative material, and the bricks could have been reused.¹⁴⁵ The sanctuary is square and barrel-vaulted like Asturian churches, but four *spolia* marble columns flank the entrance. Two

Figure 81 Santa Comba de Bande (Ourense), brick vault



144 Dodds, 1990, 55-6, 125-26, n. 64; Kingsley, 1979, 183-84; Puig i Cadafalch, 1961, 137-39; Utrero, 2009b, 137.

145 Utrero, 2010, 10-12; Richter, 2007, 671-83: 'All dating methods require a number of assumptions to be

of the capitals are probably Roman *spolia* but the other two could be ninth-century *spolia* as they are crudely carved in a Ramiran style with liberal use of cord moulding (fig. 82). Some of the features that seem old-fashioned, especially the semi-circular arches, could have been inspired by the stone structures in the nearby Roman military camp. The reused masonry probably determined much of the structure and form of the church. Although Caballero and Utrero have not suggested a date beyond the end of the ninth century, I think it is possible, given that both Santa Comba de Bande and São Frutuoso had close links to San Pedro de

Celanova, that both were built in the years after the Santa Comba de Bande dispute, not long before the chapel of San Miguel de Celanova. They constitute a distinct sub-group with a shared interest in the use of Roman ashlar masonry to create small evocative spaces, a delight in mixing vaulting techniques, little liking for sculpture – or no access to suitable expertise – and a refined awareness of Byzantine architectural language.

Christian Architecture in al-Andalus

If more were known about Christian buildings in al-Andalus, our view of those in the north might be significantly altered. As it is, two buildings have to bear the weight of any speculation. One, Mesas de Villaverde ('Bobastro'), a rock-cut basilica, without archaeological layers, in the hills north of Málaga, is so unusual and without historical context that it is of little help. Utrero has likened it to San Miguel de Escalada in plan.¹⁴⁶ The second, Santa María de Melque, is not in tenth-century Córdoba, whose Christians have received most scholarly attention, but 35 kilometres west of Toledo. As Roger Collins has stated, however important the seat of the Caliphate was for Christian leaders, 'it should not be assumed that it was the principal urban stronghold of the religion'.¹⁴⁷ Although Seville grew in importance, Toledo's archbishop remained the Primate, as in the Visigothic era, even if the occupant is not always visible in historical sources.¹⁴⁸ The idea that Toledo might have remained a significant functional centre of Christianity in al-Andalus is strengthened by Díaz y Díaz's research on the circulation of manuscripts, which proposed

Figure 82 Santa Comba de Bande (Ourense), chancel



made, and these need to be evaluated carefully for each individual site'.

¹⁴⁶ Utrero, 2012a, 125–45.

¹⁴⁷ Collins, 1995a, 205.

¹⁴⁸ For Seville, see Aillet, 2010, 45–93.

that Toledo received manuscripts from the north as well as acting a conduit for those coming from the south.¹⁴⁹ Some of the best evidence for migration from the south to the north concerns people moving from Toledo to the area around Zamora on the river Duero, near the modern border with Portugal.¹⁵⁰ Toledo experienced turmoil in the early tenth century, when it became the focus of a lengthy rebellion against Córdoba, and was even briefly held by Alfonso III in 906.¹⁵¹ In these circumstances, it would not be surprising to find the exchange of other artistic ideas between Toledo and the north. As so little of tenth-century Toledo has survived, Melque has to be considered with the help of very little contextual background.¹⁵² Glaire Anderson has recently noted how Syrian caliphs and aristocrats visited monasteries in the countryside for retreat and enjoyment of their gardens, which, given the proximity of Melque to hunting opportunities, could offer a new perspective.¹⁵³ Dates for the church at Melque have ranged from the seventh to the tenth century, and the site, together with the surrounding area, may have been occupied during both the Roman and Visigothic periods. In their 1999 study, Caballero and Fernández considered the possibilities of earlier agrarian use or metal processing, given the silver-bearing mines in the area; there was evidence for the former, but not for the latter, although that does not rule it out entirely and such a use might help to explain the continuing importance of

the site.¹⁵⁴ It used to be assumed that Melque could not post-date the invasion of 711 because the *dhimmi* rules banned church construction. It is now accepted, however, that those rules were not enforced at all times, nor in all places. Even so, it is difficult to identify a time when a Christian community outside Toledo would have had the funding and technical resources to build such a sizeable church. Sally Garen argues for an eighth-century date based on comparisons with Syrian Umayyad palaces and with the churches traditionally seen as Visigothic, including San Juan de Baños and San Pedro de la Nave.¹⁵⁵ Many of her comparisons are valid but, if those churches are not Visigothic, the conclusions have to be different. As Gómez-Moreno thought, the standing building at Melque fits best with buildings of the tenth century. It references Santa Comba de Bande in its inventive engagement with reused masonry and barrel vaulting, Mazote in its sense of internal space, and Quintanilla de las Viñas in its vaulting and in the way that decoration was applied to its arches.¹⁵⁶ These comparisons may be indicative of active artistic exchange between Toledo and the northern kingdoms. Melque has also been compared to Santa Lucía del Trampal on the *Via de la Plata*; both use very large building stones, a parallel that could equally suggest a date in the eighth century for Melque or a later date for elements at Trampal. Another site, Vascos, like Toledo on the river Tagus, was cut into the rock and built from massive boulders, probably in the mid-tenth century (fig. 83). It had once been a focus for metalworking, and, perhaps after unrest in the Middle March in 932, its rocky site acquired a range of private and public buildings, including a mosque all occupied by

149 Díaz y Díaz, 1969, 392.

150 Hitchcock, 2008, 56; for the circulation of manuscripts between Toledo and the northern kingdoms, see Díaz y Díaz, 1969a, 383-92; Turienzo, 2010, 105; Christys, 2002, 19-21.

151 Christys, 2002, 18-27; Aillet, 2010, 46-48.

152 Caballero, 1980; Caballero, 1999, 199-239; Caballero, 2004a, 345-63; Caballero, 2006, 99-146; Utrero, 2009b, 139-40.

153 Anderson, 2013, 123-27.

154 Caballero, 1999, 200-13; Utrero, 2010, 6-7; Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 14-27.

155 Garen, 1992, 288-305.

156 Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 14-27.

Figure 83 Vascos (Navalmoralejo, Toledo)

Nafza Berbers.¹⁵⁷ These comparisons help to normalise the otherwise exceptional aspect of Melque, its masonry. Some of the huge stones laid dry at Melque may be reused Roman masonry, possibly from an aqueduct, whilst other more irregular blocks were quarried for the purpose, although Caballero and Utrero think all the masonry was freshly quarried. A simple moulded frieze, similar to that found on the stones of the Segóvia aqueduct, unites most of the interior. Available masonry could have determined some aspects of this building, as it did at Santa Comba de Bande, including the barrel vaulting, the profile of the wide horseshoe arches that lack the higher centre point of so many tenth-century arches, the false dome over the crossing, and the semi-circular half-columns on the exterior corners and crossing

piers.¹⁵⁸ The plan of Melque is cruciform, which aligns it with San Pedro de la Nave and Santa Comba de Bande. The central chancel chapel is a semi-circle, almost a horseshoe, inscribed in a square, covered with a half dome; two square side chapels, possibly of a different date, flank it.¹⁵⁹ Several features suggest Andalusi construction, including the way that occasional blocks of masonry are laid lengthwise, the relieving arch above the lintel, and the use of stucco on the interior.¹⁶⁰ The false dome, pierced by four oculi, seems to be essentially a groin vault and was probably covered in stucco, perhaps in imitation of a segmental vault. Although small fragments of stucco decoration remain only on the south crossing arch, Melque presumably

¹⁵⁷ Izquierdo, 2005, 35-56; Collins, 2012, 103, 169.

¹⁵⁸ Utrero, 2006a, 156.

¹⁵⁹ Garen, 1992, 299.

¹⁶⁰ Garen, 1992, 291 and 298-99.

Figure 84 Santa María de Melque (Toledo),
stucco on arch at the crossing



once had an extensive programme of such decoration (fig. 84). One of the surviving fragments encases the pronounced springing of a horseshoe arch, with a naturalistic acanthus scroll on the intrados, but a stylised foliate scroll with formal rosettes on the face of the archivolt. Various radiocarbon tests have been carried out in an attempt to determine a date for the construction of Melque. A fragment of burnt wood from the western porch returned a date of 930+/, but an analysis of the esparto grass used in the stucco gave dates between 640 and 890, and thermoluminescence tests of bricks in adjacent rooms gave dates between 755 and 788.¹⁶¹ Caballero has co-ordinated these

results with his analysis of the stratigraphy, using recent approaches to archaeological probability, and vigorously defends a date in the late eighth century, which is increasingly accepted.¹⁶²

Catalonia: A Region Apart?

Before returning to León and Castile, I wish to briefly consider some comparative material at the other end of the peninsula, in the Catalanian counties. Almost no physical trace of building remains from the eighth or ninth centuries, and documentary evidence confirms the derelict condition of churches in the diocese of Narbonne, which encompassed Catalonia, at the end of the ninth century.¹⁶³ Charles the Simple (r. 898-911) renewed Carolingian control of Aquitaine and Catalonia, not by visiting it, but by the judicious use of local nobles and ecclesiastics. From the documents that transferred this authority, it is clear that at the end of the ninth century churches were ruined and could not be repaired.¹⁶⁴ This situation began to change in the mid-tenth century, when, according to Ibn Hayyān, the Count of Barcelona, Sunyer I, had close diplomatic contact with Córdoba. Trade was probably central to this discussion, and the result for the Catalans was protection from attacks by Saracen pirates based in the Balearics and Fraxinetum in Provence, and a guarantee of free trade, probably in exchange for a tributary relationship with Córdoba.

¹⁶² Bayliss, 2009, 123-47; for Spain, see Vigil-Escalera, 2009, 97-118. It remains uncertain whether a sufficient corpus exists in Spain for secure results, especially for materials other than wood, and whether the results of tests done in what may have been less auspicious circumstances can be part of such a corpus.

¹⁶³ Barral i Altet, 2011, 33.

¹⁶⁴ Riché, 1993, 246.

¹⁶¹ Garen, 1992, 295; Caballero, 1999a, appendices; Utrero, 2010, 6-7.

In 942, in common with the other northern Christian rulers, Sunyer signed a treaty with 'Abd al-Rahmān III. The arrangements were brokered by the Jewish official from Córdoba, Hasdai ibn Shaprut, who also accompanied the bishop of Girona on his visit to Córdoba. Around the same time, Emperor Otto I and Hugh of Arles sent ambassadors to Córdoba in an attempt to enlist aid in controlling pirates around the Balearic Islands.¹⁶⁵ In 953, the Count of Barcelona again sent his son to Córdoba to sue for peace.

Although later Arab attacks destroyed most of the Catalan buildings from this period, documents record many foundations, in Ripoll in 935, in Serrateix in 940, and in Barcelona at Sant Pere de les Puelles in 945.¹⁶⁶ Sant Pere de les Puelles was a nunnery set up outside the city walls and attached to the ancient church of St. Saturninus, under the patronage of Sunyer I and his consort, Riquilda of Toulouse. The same count had encouraged a new population to settle on the El Penedès plain around 930, and Teuderico, bishop of Barcelona, consecrated a tiny chapel to St. Michael on the ancient site of Olèrdola.¹⁶⁷ Raised on a fossilised coral reef, this site provided a defensible position, rubble and ashlar masonry for reuse, access to the fertile plain below, and good communication along the old *Via Augusta*. Enough of the fabric survives to show that the chapel was single-aisled with a semi-circular apse inscribed in a square with a small horseshoe opening of irregular voussoirs.¹⁶⁸ Similar small chapels may have been built further north, in the plain of Empordà. Charters record many other small foundations on modest estates, and slaves often form part of

the donations.¹⁶⁹ The small church of Sant Julià de Boada is one possible example, although no documentary evidence confirms an early date, and it may be the result of more than one building campaign.¹⁷⁰ The church has three sections, a single nave with a south door, a smaller choir, and a tapering eastern chapel. All the openings have horseshoe arches, although the doorway is a restoration. The barrel-vaulted east end is raised, and its horseshoe arch rests on straight imposts with rough zigzag carving, whilst the arch that divides the nave from the choir has more sophisticated moulded imposts.¹⁷¹

After the succession of al-Hakam II in 961, the Count of Barcelona tested his authority by an attack on Tortosa, but by 966 the previous tributary relationship was re-established and ambassadors went to Córdoba with slaves, furs, tin, and armour, including shields and Frankish swords.¹⁷² Ibn Hayyān also recounts the diplomatic visit of 971, when Borrell II of Barcelona had to promise complete obedience, and al-Rāzī that of 974 when the Catalan ambassador, in Córdoba at the same time as emissaries from Otto II, took a letter expressing love and submission together with the usual gifts of slaves, brocade, and arms.¹⁷³

The Caliph al-Hakam was seated on a throne in the alcove of the Eastern salon ... First the counsellors were received and seated according to their rank ... Earlier Jahwar ibn al-Shaykh had been sent to the ambassadors of Count Borrell, with a squadron of cavalry and a small group of Christians to act as interpreters. He returned with them and with Borrell's gift to the Caliph al-Hakam, consisting of 30

165 Dodds, 1990, 90; Sánchez Martínez, 1999, 29-35.

166 Ripoll, 2009b, 229-42.

167 Bosch Casadevall, 1999, 467-69.

168 Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 53-58.

169 Collins, 1995a, 257.

170 Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 67-70.

171 Utrero, 2006a, 540-41.

172 Bramon, 2000, no. 424.

173 al-Rāzī, 1967, 4.

Muslim captives, including men, women and children, and not counting loads of brocade and arms ... Permission was given for them to enter the Caliph's chamber ... At the door of the throne room they prostrated themselves, until they reached the Caliph ... whose hand they kissed. They then stepped back and, still standing, presented their credentials. After looking them over, the Caliph questioned them about their lord Borrell ... and the condition of their county.

This pattern of tributary visits shows that Catalonia followed a similar trajectory to that experienced in León under Sancho I (r. 956-958/959-966) and Ramiro III. Yet Borrell II of Barcelona (r. 945-993) was also forging links with Christians north of the Pyrenees. He went to the reforming monastery of Saint-Géraud at Aurillac in the Auvergne and returned with Gerbert, the future Pope Sylvester II, who wished to study texts in Vic under Bishop Atton. Gerbert may also have visited Ripoll, where he could have access to mathematical and astrological texts transmitted through Arabic books, perhaps one of the benefits of subjection to Córdoba in the time of al-Hakam.¹⁷⁴ In 970, Borrell II also visited Pope John XIII in Rome and met Emperor Otto I. Between these two spheres of activity, the Catalan counts managed a network of trade routes that used old Roman roads.¹⁷⁵ Together with Barcelona's control of the coast, these brought in substantial revenues. In the 970s, new building flourished on both sides of the Pyrenees under the patronage of the count of Barcelona, the count of Besalú, and

the count of Cerdanya, whose lands straddled the mountains. Of the major constructions two were near the coast: Sant Pere de Rodes (Girona, 974) and Saint Génis-des-Fontaines (Pyrénées-Orientales); one further inland on the plain, Sant Pere in Besalú (977); and further into the mountains, Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa (Pyrénées-Orientales, 974) and Ripoll (977). The only building of this group that retains a substantial amount of its late tenth-century structure is Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa, consecrated in 974. Built with the support of the count of Cerdanya and under the leadership of Abbot Guarí (Garin), Cuxa was a large church that expressed the ambitions of its reforming Benedictine monks. Guarí was a significant figure in a network that included Maieul, abbot of Cluny, and Gerbert of Aurillac. Despite these northern connections, Guarí built a church that still looked south for some of its features. The wide nave had only four bays, supported on pillars, and a wooden roof. The central chancel chapel was replaced in the eleventh century, but was probably oblong in plan. Two pairs of vaulted chapels open off a projecting transept through keyhole openings. They are deep like those at Cluny II, but in contrast to that possible model, they are separated from the central chapel. The walls and pillars are constructed of rubble and roughly cut stones, which were doubtless covered in stucco. Mozarabic horseshoe arches, with solid springing points without imposts, dominated the style of this church in the nave arcade, the aisles, and in the openings to the chapels. The projecting voussoirs of these horseshoe arches were sheared in the sixteenth century to obscure this feature and make them appear semi-circular.¹⁷⁶

Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa has an iconic place in the culture of the region, and there has been considerable resistance amongst scholars to

174 Gaillard, 1956, 22-24; Castiñeiras, 2008a, 163; Viladrich, 2009, 101-11; Miró Bonfill, count of Besalú and bishop of Gerona, may have been involved in the acquisition of these scientific texts.

175 Jarrett, 2009, 217-43; Bolòs i Masclans, 1991-2, 409-36.

176 Poisson, 233 and 534-36; Gaillard, 1956, 31.

recognising any debt to Córdoba. Ponsich, for example, has pointed to fine distinctions in the construction of the arches to distinguish them from Andalusí technique.¹⁷⁷ At the beginning of the twentieth century, many scholars, including Puig i Cadafalch, were content to see Cuxa as 'Mozarabic'. Félix Hernández was the first to publish such an interpretation of the building in 1932, which was supported by Georges Gaillard.¹⁷⁸ Whitehill also concurred with the 'Mozarabic' character of the building. In particular, he noted the way that one of the absidiole windows in the south transept was splayed only on the interior, a feature found, for example, at Celanova.¹⁷⁹ However, aside from the diplomatic contact, no records support the idea of artistic exchange with Córdoba. Guará brought a builder from Cuxa for work on the saint's tomb at one of his other monasteries, Saint-Hilarie d'Aude. Guará described the workman as 'a builder, a man of wondrous work' (*structorem miri laboris virum*). Although that description suggests that he was a layman of some status and perhaps tied to Guará, it says nothing about his training or other projects.¹⁸⁰

Catalonia has no building at this period with contemporary sculpture *in situ*, although one or two isolated decorative pieces may belong to Catalan buildings of the second half of the tenth century.¹⁸¹ For example, a stucco window grille pierced by irregular squares, similar to the panels on the screen at Santa Cristina de Lena, survives from the monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès, outside Barcelona.¹⁸² Gaillard and many other scholars attribute the capitals in

the crypt at Vic and capitals from Ripoll to this period, whilst others see them in the first half of the eleventh century.¹⁸³ This dispute is yet to be settled, and the capitals will be considered in the next chapter. Given that very few churches in León had marble capitals with high quality chisel carving, and that none of the surrounding areas in Galicia or Castile, or further afield in Pamplona or Aragón, produced significant carving at this time, it would not be surprising if a similar situation pertained in Catalonia. Any exception to that could be explained by Catalonia's proximity to Zaragoza, or by its regular contact with Córdoba. In any event, the architecture of Catalonia comes across as yet another local variation of the peninsular culture and, at this period, not discrete. It is hard to find evidence for cultural exchange between Catalonia and the other polities of northern Spain at this time, perhaps because the political links that would record such contact were not in place. One exceptional incident may counter that impression, and even explain the resemblance between two buildings over 800 kilometres apart. Around 960, Caesarius, abbot and founder of Montserrat, may have travelled to Santiago de Compostela to gain support for his claim to the archbishopric of Tarragona. He maintained that he had a document that recognised his position, signed by eleven Galician and Leonese bishops, including Sisnando II of Iria and Rosendo of Dumio.¹⁸⁴ When his Catalan colleagues refused to acknowledge his metropolitan position, he appealed to Pope John XIII without success. Nonetheless, he continued to use the title for the rest of his life.¹⁸⁵ The Catalan bishops decided to continue

177 Ponsich, 1970, 2-26; Ponsich, 1971, 17-27; Ponsich, 1988, 7-32; Barral i Altet, 1999, 187-89 and 512-14.

178 Gaillard, 1956, 28-29.

179 Whitehill, 1941, 56-57.

180 Poisson, 1999, 534-35.

181 For an overview, see Camps, 1999, 215-18 and 525-27.

182 CEC, 1999, cat. no. 45, 319.

183 Gaillard, 1938b, 9-27; Gaillard, 1956, 19-35; CEC, 1999, cat. no. 30, 307.

184 *Regesta Imperii* 2,5, 1998, 145-6, no. 470; Fita, 1899, 213-30.

185 Jarrett, 2010, 1-42.

their allegiance to Narbonne, but one of the Sees listed in Caesarius's claim had no bishop. The See of Egara had lost its fight to remain independent of the bishop of Barcelona at the end of the ninth century, but it did not accept the demotion and tenth-century documents, of 963 onwards, refer again to the See of Egara (*in sede Egarense*).¹⁸⁶ Sant Miquel at Egara was long thought to be a baptistery, but the trilobed crypt suggests a mausoleum, perhaps of late antique origin.¹⁸⁷ Above ground the space recalls São Frutuoso de Montélios, through its centralised plan, its reuse of capitals and marble columns, and its experimentation with vaulting techniques (fig. 85). Like Montélios,

it is a sophisticated re-invention of Byzantine traditions, built on a site that had been occupied since late antiquity. As such it fits with the aspirations of Caesarius and his contact with leaders in the west of Galicia, as well as with the papacy in Ravenna. Raids from Córdoba were also minimal after another treaty was signed with the caliph in 966. If the contact with Galicia continued, Sant Miquel de Egara could have been its outcome at some point in the 960s or early 970s. The apse is a horseshoe inscribed in a polygon lit by three windows splayed only on the interior. The central arches rest on eight columns of unequal size, and thus create a sense of elevated and centralised space found otherwise only at Montélios at this period in the peninsula. The arms of the cross are groin-vaulted in brick, and thus reminiscent of Santa Comba de Bande, and the rounded corners of the square are covered by half-domes. Even so, there are clear differences between this Catalanian building and the Galician chapel. First, unlike other buildings of this period across the peninsula, there are no horseshoe arches in elevation at Egara, the arcades having stilted arches; secondly the central dome rests on squinches, not pendentives. The first point may be invalid, as the width of the impostes suggests that the arcades may originally have been horseshoe, and the current stilted arches sit upon them somewhat oddly. Restorations have been carried out since the seventeenth century, when interventions may have removed some of the horseshoe profiles, as at Cuxa. Subsequent excavation took place in the nineteenth century, and between 1906 and 1918, Puig i Cadafalch undertook further excavation and restoration based on the assumption that Sant Miquel was a Visigothic baptistery. His photographs suggest that at least one horseshoe profile survived until this time.¹⁸⁸ In addition,

Figure 85 Terrassa, Sant Miquel, interior



¹⁸⁶ Puig i Ustrell, 2001, 213-29.

¹⁸⁷ Ferran i Gómez, 1999, 223-27, 529-532.

¹⁸⁸ Puig i Cadaflach, 1909, 324-33.

Figure 86 Terrassa, Sant Miquel, wall painting in the apse

the windows over the west and south doorways are horseshoe in shape, an unlikely choice if the rest of the building had semi-circular arches. The dome on squinches is another matter. It was a highly unusual method of constructing a dome in the peninsula at this period, found most obviously in the Great Mosque at Córdoba.¹⁸⁹ The other survival at Sant Miquel de Terrassa is the painting in its apse (fig. 86). Only part of the scene remains, but in the upper section it seems to show a vision of Christ surrounded by angels, and in a lower row figures, possibly apostles, who gaze at the vision in amazement. As nothing similar has survived elsewhere, it is difficult to date the work, but this iconography, especially in an apse setting, was prevalent in Catalan churches after 1100. On the other hand, the drapery and poses of the

figures that fall to their knees before the vision recall Islamic figures carved on tenth-century ivory caskets. There is also circumstantial evidence for contact between monasteries in Castile and Catalonia in the form of the scriptorium at Valeránica and its special interest in theological texts associated with reformed Benedictinism. Most notably, Florentius wrote a copy of the Book of Homilies of Smaragdus (Córdoba Cathedral, Cod. 1), probably after 953. Smaragdus's writings were extremely important for the tenth-century reform movement, and this text is likely to have arrived in Castile from a Carolingian source, most probably from Catalonia, north or south of the Pyrenees.¹⁹⁰ The manuscript was inscribed for a priest called Abogalebh, and thus may have been written for a Mozarabic monastery, possibly in Córdoba

189 Krautheimer, 1986, 340.

190 For Smaragdus, see Bishko, 1980b, I, 559-90.

where the manuscript remains.¹⁹¹ All this supports the contention that the peninsula was more connected than is often assumed.

Experiments in Figurative Art?

Depictions of the human figure have been remarkably absent from most of the sites in this chapter. However, during the second half of the tenth century, they increasingly appeared on ivories in al-Andalus and in illuminated manuscripts in the north.¹⁹² Sculptural forays into figurative decoration constitute a very small group, most found in the Christian realms. Aside from some intriguing isolated pieces, the examples are concentrated in two churches, Quintanilla de las Viñas (Burgos) and San Pedro de la Nave (Zamora). Two isolated marble capitals, one from a palace in Córdoba (Museo Arqueológico de Córdoba), and another from a Christian church in the same city, integrate figurative elements into the Corinthian form. On the Islamic example, usually dated to c. 960-970, a musician occupies the centre of each face of the capital, sculpted in high relief against a background of finely carved and drilled foliage (fig. 87).¹⁹³ As Noack-Haley notes, in contrast to the evident skill of the foliate decoration, the sculptor moulded relatively crude human figures, relying on simple parallel ridges to depict the drapery, as though he had no experience of such work. The facial features of the musicians are lost, as the heads were destroyed at some later period. The Christian piece is similar in conception and even more roughly sculpted. Again a figure sits centrally on each face of the capital, but here these are busts of evangelists holding books (fig. 88). The

Figure 87 Córdoba, capital with four musicians (Museo Arqueológico de Córdoba)



Figure 88 Córdoba, capital with four evangelists (Museo Arqueológico de Córdoba)



figures are set below rosette fleurons and between large acanthus leaves that are cut away from the basket but rejoin it at the abacus.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Williams, 1970, 239-40.

¹⁹² Rosser-Owen, 2010, 29.

¹⁹³ *AAAI*S, 1992, cat. no. 40, 248, *AMS*, cat. no. 31, 85-86.

¹⁹⁴ *AMS*, cat. no. 8, 50, where the capital is presented as Visigothic.

Both capitals are experimenting, trying to find ways to incorporate the human figure into the Corinthian capital. Their approaches and solutions are sufficiently close to suggest roughly contemporary production, and not, as is often claimed, an interval of more than two centuries between them. Much further north, a fragment of sculpture depicting two male figures and a city wall has survived at San Cebrián de Mazote (Valladolid). As this piece has no clear provenance, it is difficult to know its origin or purpose, but stylistically it recalls manuscripts of the late tenth century, in particular the Codex Albeldense (976) from San Martín de Albelda and its equally historicizing copy, the Codex Emilianense (994) from San Millán de la Cogolla (La Rioja).

The church at Quintanilla de las Viñas has traditionally been assigned to the Visigothic period. Built in the area dominated by the castle of Lara, whence armies departed on campaign against al-Andalus, it was surrounded by sites associated with Visigothic hermits. In recent years evidence of a dome on pendentives has placed it within the Álava/La Rioja/Burgos group dated to the ninth century by Caballero and others.¹⁹⁵ There are arguments, however, for seeing it as a product of the later tenth century, especially if some churches in that group, as I have argued, may belong to the mid-tenth.¹⁹⁶ Other rich foundations were certainly being set up nearby in the later tenth century, most notably at SS. Cosmas and Damian, Covarrubias, where García Fernández, son of Count Fernán González, established an *infantado*, a portfolio of property, for his daughter, Urraca, in 978. The charter was written by Florentius at the very end of his career. Covarrubias had previously been a possession of Quintanilla de las Viñas,

but was now richly endowed in its own right with 45 *villae*, 22 monasteries, a salt mine, 20 beds, and an extensive collection of textiles – some specified as Byzantine (*greciscos*) – liturgical vessels, animals, and 30 male and 20 female Muslim slaves.¹⁹⁷ Nothing remains of the church fabric from that period. García Fernández (970-995) continued the policies of his father and maintained a nascent Castile by constantly playing León against Navarre.¹⁹⁸ At Quintanilla only the single apse and part of the chancel survives, exposing a three-aisled nave with partitioned side-aisles and a western tripartite transept, as well as chapels at either end of the crossing (fig. 89).¹⁹⁹ The reused ashlar masonry was probably quarried in the Roman period for the city of Clunia or for a nearby villa. The chancel arch is a high and wide horseshoe reminiscent of Mazote or Melque in its generous proportions, and windows with splays on the inside light the apse and chancel. Apart from its vaulting, the most remarkable aspect of Quintanilla is the low relief sculpture that decorates both the interior and exterior of the church, including the chancel arch. The sculptor of the figurative carving at Quintanilla did not attempt to adapt the Corinthian form, but chose flat impost blocks or separate panels for his designs. The substantial imposts of the chancel arch are decorated with personifications of the sun (SOL) and the moon (LVNA) in medallions held by angels, perhaps part of an evocation of the Crucifixion. Two further impost blocks, now displaced, show unidentified figures between flying angels, one holding a cross (fig. 90). Three other panels depict upright figures, one perhaps Christ; the others holding

195 Utrero, 2009a, 230.

196 For an earlier view that assigns Quintanilla to the tenth century, see Whitehill, 1937, 16-27.

197 Serrano, 1907, no.7, 13-25; Martínez Díez, 2005, 489-90; for the working of salt mines in al-Andalus, see Echevarría, 2010, 55-74.

198 Fletcher, 1989, 58-66.

199 Arbeiter, 2001, 45-78.

Figure 89 Quintanilla de las Viñas, church of Santa María, exterior



Figure 90 Quintanilla de las Viñas, church of Santa María, impost



books are probably evangelists. The drapery on these figures, indicated by parallel incised lines with wavy hems, has many analogues in illuminated manuscripts from Tábara and Valeránica; the technique is not dissimilar from that used for the musicians on the Islamic capital.²⁰⁰ The treatment of the faces and hair is also scribal, with almond-shaped eyes, straight mouths, and noses. Three horizontal friezes decorate the exterior east wall of the chancel. Foliate scrolls filled with stylised rosettes and bunches of grapes are interpolated in the middle row by two monograms, and on the upper row by mythical and earthly quadrupeds. The two lower rows continue along the sides of the chancel, where a range of birds and arabesques inhabit the scroll. The use of zoomorphic elements in the frieze recalls the carving at San Miguel de Escalada but, at Quintanilla, the bird forms are even closer to Andalusí examples.²⁰¹ Similar inhabited scrollwork wraps around the chancel arch, and confirms that the interior and exterior decoration belong to the same phase. The south impost on the chancel arch carries an inscription +OC EXIGVVM EXIGVA OF-FLO FLAMMOLA VOTVM. Whitehill identified a Doña Flamula, wife of Gonzalo Téllez, count of Cerezo de Río Tirón, in the first three decades of the tenth century, and believed that she might be the donor.²⁰² This is not impossible, but names tended to stay in families, and the inscription at Quintanilla may commemorate another earlier or later Flamula. The church benefited from other decoration: a plaque with a palm tree relief inserted into the reconstructed wall, and a marble support from an altar, dated to the tenth century and now in the Museo de Burgos.²⁰³

The only church that bears comparison with Quintanilla de las Viñas for its sculpture programme is San Pedro de la Nave (fig. 91).²⁰⁴ The building is problematic, because it was moved from its original site between 1930 and 1932 to make way for a reservoir. Before its translation, the church lay close to a crossing of the river Esla, just outside Zamora, on the road leading towards Galicia. Geographically it was within the purview of Rosendo and his family, and may well have been attached to Celanova. The church constitutes the most convincing evocation of a Visigothic past, and continues to be dated to that period in much of the literature, but there is no mention of the site in any surviving document before a donation of Alfonso III recorded in the cartulary of Celanova; the date is disputed, but may be 907.²⁰⁵ Caballero has used stratigraphy to confirm that the building belongs substantially to one campaign, which he dates to the late ninth century.²⁰⁶ The masonry is of ashlar blocks, either quarried for the purpose or substantially recut.²⁰⁷ The plan of the church has most in common with Santa Comba de Bande, except that it has a tripartite nave, and is made cruciform only by north and south porches and emphatic crossing piers. As at Santa Comba de Bande, the masons experimented with vaulting, but they were less successful and the vaults had to be replaced, so their original form remains uncertain.²⁰⁸ Originally San Pedro de la Nave had a high chancel screen that accentuated the division from the nave, but it was lost when the nave was rebuilt in the twelfth century. Reused marble columns flank the horseshoe opening

200 Schlunk, 1945, 253.

201 Cruz, 2002-2003, 341-349.

202 Whitehill, 1937, 16-27.

203 Sastre, 2009, 309-30.

204 Lorenzo, 2004, 19-37.

205 Sáez, 1996, 70-71, no. 9.

206 Utrero, 2010, 12-16.

207 Utrero, 2004, 209-321; Kingsley, 1979, 39-49, 186-91.

208 Utrero, 2009a, 229; Utrero, 2004, 299-301.

Figure 91 San Pedro de la Nave (Zamora), exterior

to the apse and are attached to the four pillars at the crossing.

The sculptural decoration of the church has generated most controversy, not least because it unites two very different approaches. Scholars continue to debate whether these represent two sculptors, contrasting groups of Visigothic *spolia*, or a combination of *spolia* and *ex profeso* carving. Here the sculpture will be treated as the work of two sculptors, one primarily interested in the production of neo-Visigothic work, and the other more experimental. The first sculptor concentrated on geometric and stylised foliate decoration applied to a frieze that runs around the sanctuary, to imbricated panels around the windows, and impost blocks and capitals at the entrance to the central apse (fig. 92). He drew on traditional motifs found on Roman funerary stelae, combining vine scrolls, daisy wheels, and crosses to form abstract

patterns. Working on the pyramidal capitals and bases at the crossing, the second sculptor employed zoomorphic designs alongside figures and, most innovatively, biblical scenes, the Sacrifice of Abraham and Daniel in the Lions' Den (fig. 93). His impost blocks have vegetal scroll decoration that is reminiscent of the friezes at Quintanilla, both in the form of the scroll itself and in the use of birds with finely delineated plumage to inhabit it (fig. 94), which echo the birds pecking grapes on the chancel barrier at Escalada. This sculptor also exhibits a fascination with the human face, and even includes isolated heads in his scrolls; the facial features are more individualised than those at Quintanilla: some have beards, and the hair and features are differentiated. Bearded figures were highly unusual at this time, but another isolated example appears in the Girona Beatus

Figure 92 San Pedro de la Nave, chancel, sculpted frieze

(975), a mythical male riding a serpent.²⁰⁹ The two narrative capitals have a full-length apostle figure on each side, labelled as St. Thomas with St. Peter, and St. Paul with St. Philip. Another four apostles may once have flanked other narrative scenes at the crossing. The drapery on the figures is represented by parallel lines, as at Quintanilla, but even more scribbly. The sculptor's figurative efforts are not executed with the same fluency as the birds, animals, or foliage, so it is possible that this was a new demand on his skill, as it may have been for the sculptor of the musician capital in Córdoba. The same disparity continues into the narrative scenes of Daniel in the Lions' Den and the Sacrifice of Abraham. The lions that lean down to lick the water around Daniel's feet and the ram in the Abraham scene are all finely executed, whilst

the small human figures are less confidently carved. The scenes are dramatically conceived within their triangular spaces. In the Sacrifice of Abraham, Isaac kneels over the altar, whilst his father grasps his hair and raises a dagger to carry out the sacrifice. Above them a large Hand of God reaches down to stay Abraham's hand; the ram waits behind Abraham ready to substitute for Isaac. The same scene in the Bible of 960 uses similar components, including Abraham grasping Isaac by his hair, but arranges them to fit around the column length of the manuscript.²¹⁰ In both the manuscript and the sculpture the ram stands out as the most accomplished form. The Daniel capital is more formal: Daniel stands in his traditional orant pose, but the detailing on the lions enlivens the scene, their flowing manes and the stippling on

209 Williams, 1994b, 58 and fig. 334.

210 Williams, 1999, 179-218 and fig. 19 (Bible of 960).

Figure 93 San Pedro de la Nave, capital at the crossing, Sacrifice of Abraham



Figure 94 San Pedro de la Nave, zoomorphic capital at the crossing



their bodies recalling lions carved on marble basins in al-Andalus at the end of the tenth century.²¹¹ The decision to depict the lions lapping water is more curious, and may have derived from a mis-reading of the illuminations of the scene in some Beatus manuscripts, where Daniel and the lions stand in a den formed by a three-sided frame that looks more like a basin.²¹² A story of Daniel being licked by the lions was in circulation in Spain and North Africa as early as the fourth-century hymns of Prudentius; the Jewish chronicle of Josippon, compiled in the tenth century, described the lions like faithful dogs wagging their tails and licking Daniel, and the idea was also popular in Arab anthologies from the ninth century.²¹³ If the sculptor of this scene was trained in al-Andalus, it is possible that, for him also, the story of Daniel involved lions licking. The number of labels above the narrative scenes and the apostles, and on elements within the scenes, suggest a manuscript model and, in particular, a manuscript linked to the Girona Beatus, which uses similar 'ubi' labels and identifiers within scenes.

San Pedro de la Nave was perhaps the apogee of Mozarabic architecture and sculpture. The experimental nature of its carving suggests that the team could have produced other inventive buildings, based on Byzantine forms and in dialogue with equally rich Mozarabic manuscripts. Yet it is difficult to date any significant building activity from the northern kingdoms to the last two decades of the tenth century. This may have been because some of the most influential protagonists died around that time, the scribe Maius in 968 and Bishop Rosendo in 977. But the death that had the greatest effect

on the peninsula was that of Caliph al-Hakam II in 976. He left his kingdom to his eleven-year-old son, Hishām II, whose Basque mother, Subh, attempted to defend his position with the help of advisors. One of these defenders was Ibn Abi 'Āmir, later to be known as al-Mansur, 'the Victorious'. Not content merely to support the caliph, he gradually advanced his position and became the effective ruler of al-Andalus. He expressed this power through a large extension to the side of the Great Mosque in Córdoba and a city to rival Madīnat al-Zahrā, called Madīnat al-Zāhira. According to Ibn Hayyān, al-Mansur's military success began in 977, when he responded to raids by the Galicians with a punishing victory.²¹⁴ In 981, on the Duero near Tordesillas, al-Mansur defeated his rival, al-Mushafī who, as the official vizier (*hajib*) of the caliph, had military support from Pamplona and Castile. Thereafter al-Mansur was unstoppable. To sustain his position he needed more victories, as well as funds and activity for his armies. He achieved both through a series of over fifty raids against the northern Christian kingdoms. Chronicles say that churches were attacked from Galicia to Catalonia, stripped of their moveable wealth, and their buildings often set on fire. Thousands of captives were seized and taken to al-Andalus for ransom or slavery. More notoriously, he carried off the nuns of Sant Pere de Puellas in Barcelona in 985 and, most emblematically, the bells from Santiago de Compostela in 987. It used to be thought that some of the Christian prisoners worked on al-Mansur's large extension to the mosque in Córdoba, but Juan Souto has shown that the evidence for this assertion is insufficient. Instead the signatures on the columns all have names that are consistent with Muslim labour, probably for the most part slaves, and the masons' marks had a practical

211 *Arte islámico en Granada*, 1995, cat. no. 73; Rosser-Owen, 2007, 83-98.

212 Williams, 1994a, fig. 109 (Morgan Beatus); fig. 383 (Girona Beatus).

213 Martin, 1992, 179; Johns, 2015, 68-71.

214 Molina, 1981, 209-63 and Molina, 1982, 467-72.

and not symbolic purpose.²¹⁵ But this resolutely negative narrative of al-Mansur conceals more complex realities, alliances, and exchanges.²¹⁶ In 983, Sancho Garcés II of Pamplona gave his daughter to al-Mansur; the gift was an important marker of status, as it had usually been the caliphs who had sons by women of Navarre. In 993, Vermudo II of León sent his daughter, Teresa, to Córdoba where she was to be given to one of al-Mansur's sons.²¹⁷ Whether the kings handed over their daughters willingly or under duress is unknown.²¹⁸

Ramiro III was defeated by al-Mansur, but León was not sacked until 988, three years after his death. It is difficult to detect artistic activity in the north during this tumultuous period; a scriptorium at San Millán de la Cogolla produced illuminated manuscripts around the millennium, but more broadly the picture was bleak. One interpretation is that the internal divisions of al-Andalus put an end to innovative Mozarabic art and its manifold experimentation.

This chapter has presented a narrative in which artistic invention worked in rhythm across the peninsula. The main engine of this process was Córdoba, and the courts of the

caliphs, 'Abd al-Rahmān III and al-Hakam II. Their projects brought together a wide range of technical expertise, some of whose practitioners sporadically went north to work on buildings for a network of kings, senior churchmen, and nobles. The status of the craftsmen remains obscure, but given that most of the known artisans in al-Andalus were slaves, it is possible that they travelled on loan or as diplomatic gifts or ransom payments. Byzantium, past and present, was an important part of the conceptual framework behind much of this art and architecture. For the Umayyads in the south, it denoted not only their Damascan caliphate but also the height of contemporary intellectual activity. Classical learning, a new *paideia*, was revived through social and political links across the Mediterranean. Legitimacy and its persuasive expression through art were crucial to all the rulers, regardless of religion, and in the north, rulers and religious leaders wished to participate in the same discussions, again for both historical and contemporary reasons. The results were inventively historicist, imagined Byzantine pasts viewed through the lens of Córdoba.

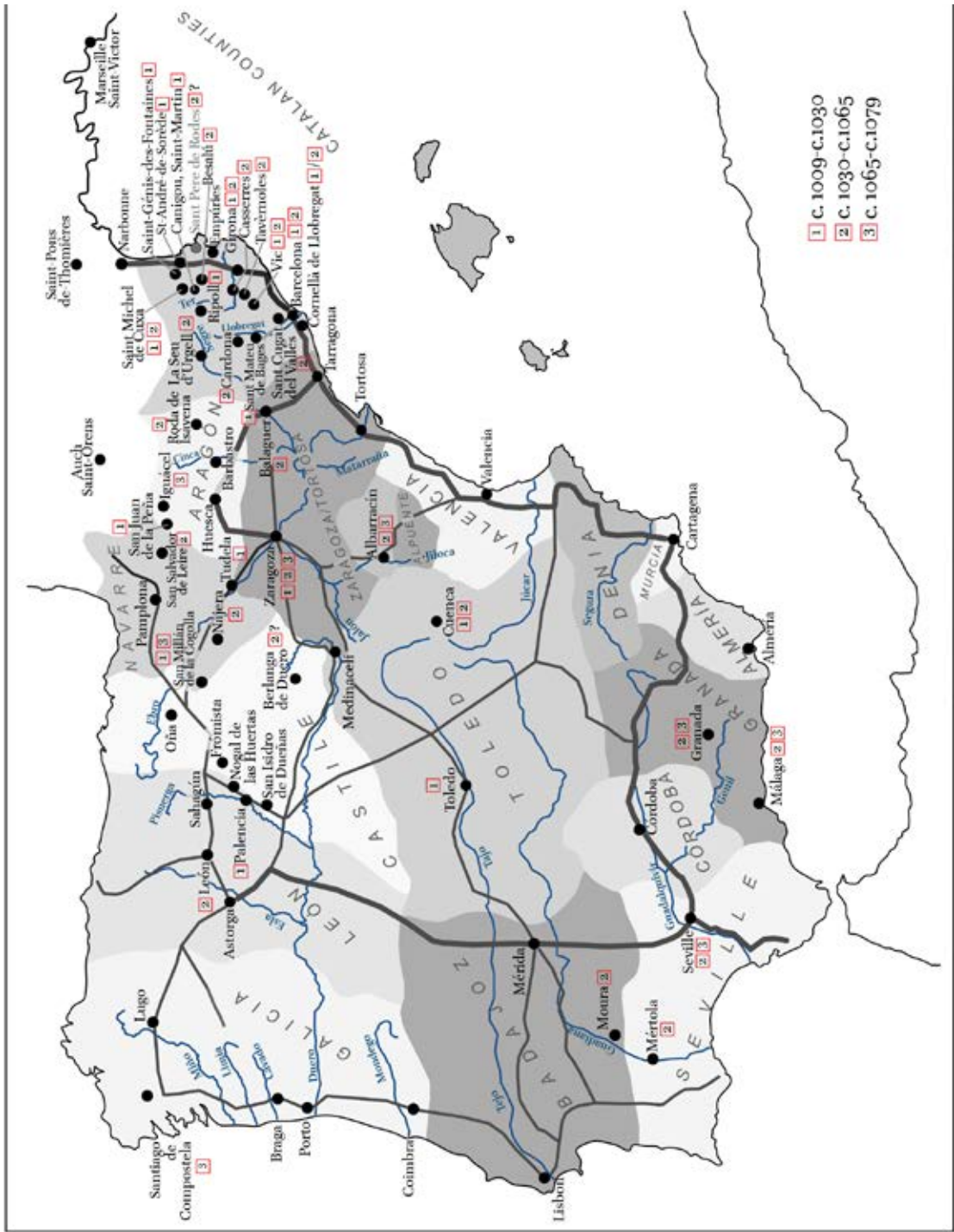
215 Souto, 2010, 31-75.

216 Rosser-Owen, 2007, 83-98; Rosser-Owen, 2004.

217 Barton, 2011, 13-17.

218 Barton, 2011, 8; Molina, 1982, 246-47.

Map VII Map of the Peninsula c. 1000-c. 1070



6 Dispersal after the Fall of the Caliphate

In 1003 Ramon Borrell, count of Barcelona, raided the Muslim city of Balaguer, northeast of Zaragoza. In response 'Abd al-Malik, son of al-Mansur, left Córdoba on campaign. Ibn Idhārī said that 'he departed through the Gate of Victory, the eastern gate of the gates of Madīnat al-Zāhira ... in a new coat of mail and an octagonal iron helmet shining with gilding'.¹ His army rode through Toledo, Guadalajara, and at Medinaceli met up with additional forces supplied by León and Castile in accordance with a treaty of mutual defence.² They headed towards Montserrat and Manresa in the lands of Ramon Borrell.³ Roundly defeated, the count of Barcelona had to send ambassadors to Córdoba to sign a peace treaty and to negotiate the release of numerous captives. This truce with León came to an abrupt end in 1005, when 'Abd al-Malik and his general, Wadih, from the Middle March around Toledo, brutally attacked the city of Zamora on the river Duero. Many inhabitants were killed or captured, and buildings not already in ruins from the raids of al-Mansur were burnt or destroyed. The following year 'Abd al-Malik went to Zaragoza, Huesca, and Barbastro to establish a base for raiding north into the foothills of the Pyrenees.⁴ Pamplona seems to have escaped attack, perhaps because, as the home of 'Abda, the mother of al-Malik's half-brother, it maintained a political link with Córdoba.⁵ The county of Castile had also enjoyed two years of relative peace, but in 1007 it was the focus of 'Abd al-Malik's

annual campaign. The usual defeat followed, and 'Abd al-Malik seized the town and fortress of Clunia above the river Duero. In recognition the caliph gave him the title of *al-Muzaffar*, 'the Victorious'.

Art Under 'Abd al-Malik

Art in the first decade of the eleventh century celebrates the confident and victorious rule of 'Abd al-Malik. The largest and most extravagantly decorated of the ivories from al-Andalus was made for him c. 1004-1005 (fig. 95).⁶ The imagery is traditional and caliphal. Twenty-one eight-lobed medallions encircle varied scenes: peacocks, lions attacking deer, courtly leisure pursuits, hunting, falconry, and especially musicians, as well as a formal image of the bearded caliph. Each panel is framed by a strip of guilloché that connects the lobed medallions, as on earlier caliphal pyxides. The background, both inside and outside the medallions, is filled with finely drilled vegetation sometimes inhabited by small birds; tiny addorsed pairs of birds drinking from a flower-cup sit in some of the spandrels. The numerous lions in combat on this piece clearly relate to poetry where the 'Āmirids, the dynasty of al-Mansur, were celebrated as lions of the battlefield (*mujāhidūn*).⁷ Victory may be the explicit message, but the whole bespeaks sophisticated classical *otium*, aristocratic leisure, under a supposedly stable Caliphate.⁸ The inscription that runs around the casket wishes 'Abd al-Malik blessings

1 Ibn Idhārī, 1993, 13.

2 Martínez Díez, 2005, 587-88.

3 Martínez Díez, 2005, 591.

4 Martínez Díez, 2005, 596-97.

5 Barton, 2011, 8-9; Kennedy, 1996, 124.

6 *AAAI*S, 1992, cat. no. 4, 198-201.

7 Rosser-Owen, 2007, 92-93.

8 Robinson, 2002; and Robinson, 2007, 99-114.

Figure 95 'Pamplona' Ivory Casket of 'Abd al-Malik (Museo de Navarra, Pamplona)



from God, goodwill, and happiness. At least thirteen other small inscriptions record the work of the highly skilled apprentice craftsmen and of Faraj, the head of the workshop. These signatures are self-conscious, playing with ideas of their lowly status and invisibility by placing them, for example, under the foot of the caliphal figure.⁹ The sense of prosperous continuity evoked by this piece reflected the policy of 'Abd al-Malik. Other carving that survives from the same period includes two large marble basins, one now in the Madrasa Ben Youssouf in Marrakesh (71 x 155 x 84 cm), which may originally have been made for a palace garden in Madīnat al-Zāhira.¹⁰ The fragmentary inscription includes a dedication to 'Abd al-Malik. The vegetal carving on the

visible side is in two registers, but at one end small lions stand on the outstretched wings of a pair of Umayyad eagles, perhaps a witty reference to the hajib's power on the back of the Umayyad caliph. A second basin, now in the Museo de la Alhambra, features on the short sides small lions, and perhaps goats, standing on the wings of eagles; the eagles grip deer in their talons.¹¹ The rectangular sides share a design, four stilt-legged lions attacking deer from behind, where the central two deer flank a Tree of Life (fig. 96), but they are now differentiated, as one has retained a frame of small birds on three sides, whilst the other is framed by a re-carved inscription.

The extent of the reliance of León and Castile on Córdoba is well demonstrated by an act of diplomacy in 1004. Ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406)

⁹ Blair, 2005, 83-86; see also Blair, 2015, 230-48.

¹⁰ AAAIS, cat. no. 43, 255; Rosser-Owen, 2007, 83-98.

¹¹ *Arte islámico en Granada*, 1995, no. 73, 277-80.

Figure 96 Marble basin, Granada (Museo de la Alhambra)

Photograph: Archivo Oronoz

tells how Menendo González (or Gonçalves), count of Galicia, and Sancho García, count of Castile, vied for the tutelage, and thereby the regency, of the five-year-old Alfonso V of León. In order to resolve the dispute, they asked 'Abd al-Malik for an arbiter. He sent the Mozarab judge Aṣbagh (Asbag ibn Abd Allah Nabil), who decided in favour of the guardian Menendo González over Sancho García, the boy's uncle.¹² The only Christian works of art from the northwest in this period with a clear provenance, and consequent date, are a miniature silver-gilt chalice (height 11 cm x diameter 7.5 cm) and paten, cast, embossed, and chased. An

inscription links them to the same Menendo González (d. 1008) and his wife, Toda.¹³ Two tiers of pierced alternating horseshoe arches decorate the stem, and a scroll, inhabited by three birds and a lion, circles the cup. The chalice is paired with an equally small plate or paten in silver gilt on which it can stand, and both would have functioned ideally with a portable altar of comparable dimensions. Geographic location, size, and some stylistic affinity have led to both liturgical vessels being associated with an ivory pyxis made for 'Abd al-Malik between 1004 and 1007.¹⁴ Some aspects of this pyxis recall the Pamplona casket – the eight-lobed

12 Dozy, 1881, 102; for the Galician aristocracy, see Isla, 2015, 263–75.

13 Castiñeiras, 2010, cat. no. 25, 364–66.

14 Prado-Vilar, 1997, 34–35; *AAAIIS*, cat. no. 5, 202.

medallions containing lions, a peacock and two deer carved on the lid, and the vegetal decoration on the cylindrical body – but an arcade of horseshoe arches, linked by small medallions encircling animals or birds, that surrounds the body of the pyxis sets it apart. According to an inventory, by the seventeenth-century the ivory pyxis was in use in Braga as a reliquary, and nothing is known of it before that. Serafín Moralejo suggested that the miniature liturgical vessels might have been made to fit inside the pyxis and that the three objects functioned as an ensemble.¹⁵ According to this theory the pyxis could have been a diplomatic gift from 'Abd al-Malik to Menendo brought by Asbag when he came to resolve the dispute. Menendo and 'Abd al-Malik both ruled *de facto* but in the name of a dynastic ruler, and thus may have had a particularly strong reason for cementing their bond. As the pyxis cannot be localised to Braga before the seventeenth century, the case has to rest on the stylistic comparison between the medallions around the upper body of the pyxis and those on the cup of the chalice, which, although suggestive, is not sufficiently close to seal the argument. The goldwork is usually assumed to be local, but it is possible that the inscription was added after manufacture, and that the cup and plate could have been made elsewhere. The cup and plate could also have been a present from Asbag or acquired as booty, since nothing denotes them as Christian aside from the inscription.¹⁶

As far as we know, 'Abd al-Malik did not have time to undertake any major building projects.¹⁷ One survival in Toledo, albeit a local and not an official project, may give some impression of architecture in al-Andalus around 1000. The small mosque or oratory of Bāb al-Mardūm

(fig. 97) was built of brick c. 999-1000 beside one of the city gates over the old Roman road into Toledo.¹⁸ Below a corbel table and a row of sawtooth brickwork, the upper part of the street façade carries an inscription that dates the building and names its founder as Ahmad ibn Hadidi and its architect as Musa ibn 'Ali. The decoration of this façade is completed by a rectangular panel of lattice brickwork, framed by rows of sawtooth, over an arcade of intersecting blind horseshoe arches. Three open doorways, the central one larger than the side doors, lead into the interior. Inside, the mosque is square with three aisles of three bays. Horseshoe arcades rest on monolith columns topped by diverse capitals, some of which may be *spolia*. Above the arcades nine small vaulted domes explore nine variations of ribbed vaulting, playing with the experimental ideas found in the domes over the maqsura in the Great Mosque of Córdoba.¹⁹ The southeast façade has been damaged, and the northeast façade was demolished when the mosque was eventually turned into a church around 1200. The northwest façade, in common with the miniature domes, displays understanding of the decorative vocabulary and technical expertise used in Córdoba. The inner core and outer skin of the building are apparent in the layering of the masonry and the rhythms of the arches on this façade. A sturdy corbel table and two rows of sawtooth brickwork support the upper part of the wall; below, a row of six trilobed arches encase smaller recessive horseshoe arches that are emphasised by the use of red and white alternating voussoirs. The brick columns of the trilobed arches rest on a stringcourse, below which three large semi-circular blind arches surround three open horseshoe doorways. These doorways are again recessed and spread

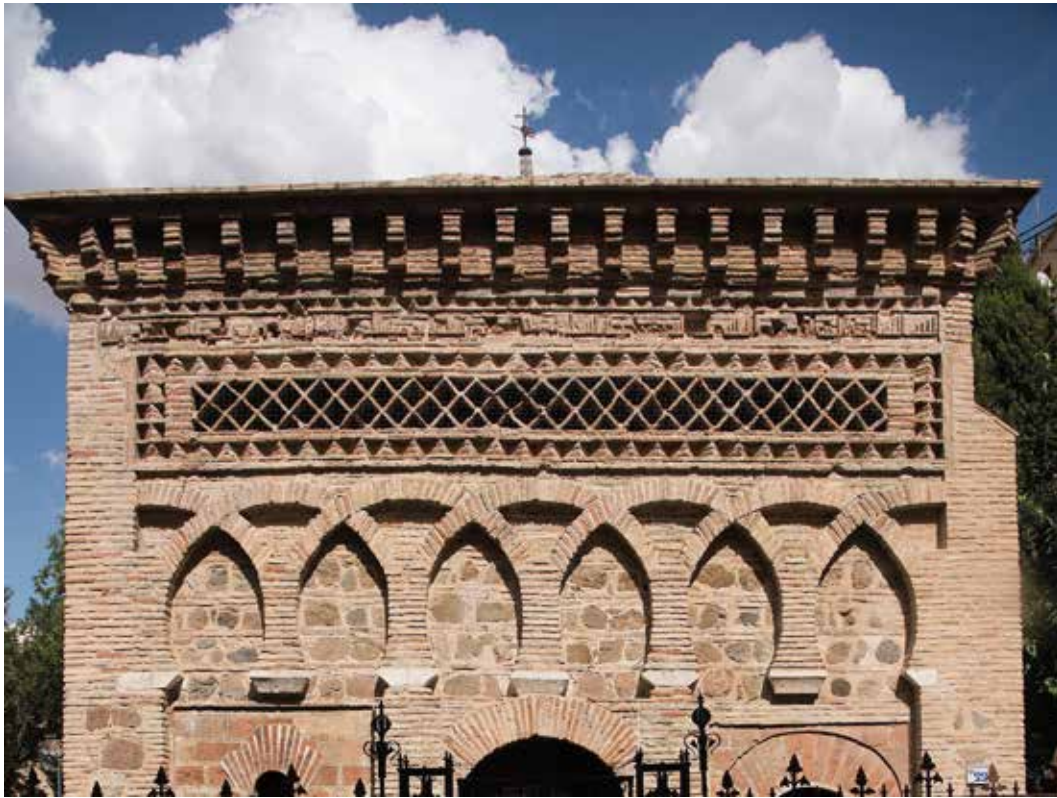
15 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 73, 148-149.

16 Dodds, 2007, 355-56.

17 Rosser-Owen, 2004.

18 Dodds, 2008, 113-22; Ruiz Taboada, 2007, 5-9.

19 Ewert, 1977, 287-354; King, 1989, 332-90.

Figure 97 Toledo, Bâb al-Mardûm mosque/church of Cristo de la Luz, exterior

the weight of the wall through the long, thin, radially laid bricks that form their voussoirs. The whole produces an aesthetic cascade of loading, part structural and part decorative, which recalls the maqsura at Córdoba. Much further north, at Berlanga del Duero (Soria), a small rectangular building, with an eastern chapel and a Christian wall-painting cycle, is known as the church of San Baudelio (fig. 98). At its west end a forest of rough columns support horseshoe arches and an upper gallery, whilst a central column grows into a ribbed vault, like a gigantic Tree of Life. The area was not absorbed into León and Castile until the end of the eleventh century, which leaves many unanswered questions. It remains unclear whether this church was built at a later date,

as Milagros Guardia has maintained, or if the structure was an Islamic oratory in the first half of the eleventh century.²⁰

Art during the fitna

So matters might have continued, but in 1008, after another campaign against Castile, 'Abd al-Malik was taken seriously ill. He was carried on a litter in retreat to Córdoba, but died before he reached the city.²¹ The office of hajib passed to al-Mansur's younger son, 'Abd al-Rahmān, known as 'Sanchuelo' (little Sancho) after his

²⁰ Guardia, 2012, 181-213.

²¹ Martínez Díez, 2005, 601-604.

Figure 98 Berlanga de Duero, San Baudelio, interior

grandfather, Sancho Garcés II of Pamplona.²² Sanchuelo was unable to maintain the necessary delicate balance in the Caliphate of Hishām II. He publically designated himself as successor to the caliph, tried to force the court to wear turbans in the Berber fashion, and brought about not only his own death but also the collapse of the Caliphate. Sanchuelo left Córdoba on campaign in 1009, but his Berber army deserted him when they heard that the caliph had been deposed. One faction, composed mostly of professional men, scholars, theologians, and craftsmen, had decided to support another descendant of 'Abd al-Rahmān III, a great-grandson known as al-Mahdi ('Rightly-guided' or 'Saviour'). They incited the mob to destroy the 'Āmirid city of Madīnat al-Zāhira. Against them were Berbers, many of whom had

been brought in by the 'Āmirids as soldiers, led by Sulayman ibn al-Hakam. Such rival factions tore apart the Caliphate, and Arab historians named this period *fitna*, civil disturbance or anarchy, with Qu'ranic connotations of suffering and punishment.²³ The Caliphate ended effectively when Hishām II died in 1013, but pretenders continued to come forward until c. 1031. These years were marked by a scattering of artistic expertise, to North Africa, to the taifa kingdoms in Spain and Portugal, and to the Christian kingdoms in the north of the peninsula. In these circumstances, it is plausible to think in terms of isolated trained craftsmen reaching the north, not an influx, and of their arrival primarily as captives or gifts.

Both Catalans and Castilians were embroiled in the early stages of the disintegration of

22 Rosser-Owen, 1999, 16-31.

23 Scales, 1994, 2-3.

al-Andalus, but on different sides. It was probably Count Gómez of Saldaña who was with Sanchuelo when his throat was cut on the road to Córdoba on 3 March 1009.²⁴ In November 1009 both sides sought help from Sancho García of Castile, but it was the professional army under Sulayman that Sancho García decided to assist, in exchange for promises of territory and booty. Ibn Idhārī (c. 1312) says that Sancho García gave Sulayman firewood, wheaten-flour, 1000 head of cattle and 15,000 sheep, coal, honey, saddles, and sashes for clothing – everything needed to sustain and identify his army. Together Sancho García and Sulayman defeated Wadih, the governor of the Middle March (*thaghr al-awsat*) based at Medinaceli. Wadih retreated to Córdoba, whither Sulayman and Sancho García pursued him. Córdoba surrendered on 8 November 1009, and Sulayman was proclaimed caliph in the Great Mosque. Sulayman was in no position to deliver the promised territory to Sancho García, but it would be surprising if the Castilian count left Córdoba without a considerable amount of gold, silver, and other portable goods, some of which could have been taken from the destroyed city of Madīnat al-Zāhira.²⁵

The Catalan counties played an even greater part in the *fitna*. They were drawn in by Wadih, the governor of the Middle March, who agreed to pay them well; 9000 Catalan mercenaries were to receive, for each count, one hundred dinars each day and, for the other troops, two dinars each day.²⁶ All were to have wine, meat, and other goods. In practice they could name their price, and one story says that Wadih's faction had 'granted them the right to do what they want' in Córdoba.²⁷ Even so, their foray under the command of Ramon Borrell of

Barcelona and his brother, Ermengol of Urgell, in June 1010, led to disaster and to the death of 3000 Catalans. The Berber army employed the tactic of *karr wa farr* and lured them into the centre of the field where they were attacked by the flanks of the opposing force. The dead included Count Ermengol I of Urgell.²⁸ Another encounter three weeks later led to the death of the three leading Catalanian bishops: Odón, bishop of Girona and abbot of Sant Cugat del Vallès; Arnulfo, bishop of Vic; and Aecio, bishop of Barcelona.²⁹ The list of survivors included the count of Barcelona, Ramon Borrell; Bernard, count of Besalú; his younger brother Oliba, abbot of Ripoll; Hug, count of Empúries; and Gaston of Montcada. Nonetheless, this was not a victory for Sulayman, who misread the battlefield and fled. According to Ibn Idhārī, the Cordoban mob took the opportunity to loot Madīnat al-Zahrā and the Great Mosque in Córdoba. Despite the defeat, the count of Barcelona continued to supply mercenaries to al-Andalus and became increasingly entangled with the emergent *taifa* kingdom of Zaragoza. These associations were to determine much of Catalan artistic output in the first half of the eleventh century.

The first detectable repercussions of booty and payment from Córdoba may be found in Castile, where sudden wealth may have enabled Sancho García to enhance his position in 1011. He arranged the marriage of his eldest daughter, known as Muniadonna or Mayor, to the young Sancho III of Pamplona (r. 1004-1035).³⁰ Links with León were also strengthened, and Sancho García was now able to take over the tutelage of his nephew, Alfonso V. A large part of the booty and payment from Córdoba may have enabled Sancho García to found the Castilian

24 Martínez Díez, 2005, 608-609.

25 Scales, 1994, 73 and 190; Gayangos, 1843, 491.

26 Scales, 1994, 75-76.

27 Scales, 1994, 193.

28 Scales, 1994, 76.

29 Monfar y Sors, 1853, 314.

30 Martínez Díez, 2007, 47-51.

monastery of Oña in the same year. None of that structure has survived, but the site itself is of interest, as Sancho selected a place where there were already several religious groups living in caves that were brought together under the protection of the new monastery. Whilst reachable from the old Roman road that linked Aquitaine to Astorga via Briviesca, Oña was closer to the secondary route that connected the rich salt fields of Poza de la Sal (Burgos) to the Ebro valley.³¹ Oña was to be a double monastery under Sancho García's second daughter, Tigridia. It was designated as Sancho García's place of burial and dedicated, as was traditional for intercessory sites, to the Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and St. Michael the Archangel.³²

In 1016 or early 1017 it was the turn of Sancho García's third daughter, Sancha, to be deployed in his policy of marital annexation.³³ Perhaps by now it was clear that the young Sancho III of Pamplona was a potential threat, and it seemed wise to ensure alliances on the other side of Navarre. Sancha was to be betrothed to Berenguer Ramon, the son of Ramon Borrell of Barcelona; neither had yet reached the age of twelve.³⁴ The forum for the marriage negotiations was provided by al-Mundhir, the Muslim ruler of Zaragoza. Ibn 'Idhārī describes how Sancho García travelled across the lands of Sancho III of Pamplona, via Tudela, to Zaragoza where he met Ramon Borrell and his countess, Ermesenda (c. 975/8-1058), to agree the contract.³⁵ A contemporary poem by Ibn Darrāj celebrated the occasion and addressed the complexities of this coalition.³⁶ There were clearly misgivings amongst the hawkish military that al-Mundhir

should facilitate such an alliance. To allay them Ibn Darrāj took a classic victory ode by the Eastern poet al-Mutanabbi, which included a reference to the rout of a Byzantine army 'like dirhams are scattered over a bride', and reinvented it for the betrothal.³⁷ Al-Mundhir's action is seen as a double victory, over the mutual enemy Sancho III of Pamplona by his exclusion, and over Barcelona and Castile through their subject status:

The one killed by the sword is food for the
wolf
and the one killed by mercy is a servant to
the kingdom ...
Through the contract of an edifice you
raised,
that none on earth but you tears down.
Firanja [Barcelona] is its top, Qashtillu
[Castile] its base,
and your peace its corner stones and pillars.³⁸

In the same year, 1016, the two Sanchos, of Castile and of Pamplona, described the frontier between them in considerable detail: a line that began at San Millán de la Cogolla and continued to the source of the river Valvanera, to its confluence with the Najerilla, continuing southeast and eventually ending where the Tera and Duero rivers meet at ancient Numancia (Garray).³⁹ San Millán de la Cogolla was to be the object of competitive piety between Castile and Navarre for many years. The large gilt ivory processional cross of San Millán may have been crafted in this context, where close contact between Castile and Zaragoza coincided with the strategic significance of San Millán de la Cogolla. Only three arms survive, now split between the Louvre in Paris (fig. 99) and the

31 Reyes Téllez, 2011, 1-23.

32 Isla, 2007, 151-72; Zabalza, 1998, 460.

33 Aurell, 1995, 233.

34 Gruendler, 2008, 449.

35 Dozy, 1881, 203-205.

36 Gruendler, 2008, 441.

37 Gruendler, 2008, 437-465.

38 Gruendler, 2008, 452.

39 Martínez Díez, 2005, 66-67.

Figure 99 Arm of ivory processional cross, San Millán de la Cogolla (Paris, Musée du Louvre)



Image courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art

Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid.⁴⁰ The missing fourth arm – or a central boss – may have contained an inscription, but there is no epigraphy on the surviving pieces to help with dating. The cross is often linked with a possible consecration date at the church in 984, but the document that purports to record that ceremony is problematic.⁴¹ Al-Mansur had attacked the monastery in 1002, which sits oddly with the idea that he might have been party to an earlier gift of such valuable ivory. Glaire Anderson has recently linked the cross more convincingly to

Queen Tota of Pamplona.⁴² The cross is important not only because it would have been a major statement of conspicuous consumption, but also because it combines caliphal work with a motif that clearly derives from Christian manuscript illumination. The ivory carving is a magnificent example of the caliphal tradition, as practised into the period of 'Abd al-Malik.⁴³ If it were not that these panels clearly form the arms of a cross and for the beast-masks spewing foliage, the carving might be considered a product of 'Āmirid Córdoba. However, the masks recall examples from Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, including the Rule of St. Benedict (London, British Library, Harley MS 5431, fol. 7) copied at Canterbury c. 1000, and more distantly Ottonian illumination in, for example, the Codex Egberti, 977-993 (Trier, Stadbibl. MS 24, fol. 2).⁴⁴ A large marble fountain basin from the *munya* of al-Rummaniyya features small animal heads, lions and a deer, between caulicoli, which may indicate that the 'mask' was not completely outside the repertoire of Andalusī carvers, although not in the form that it appears on the cross.⁴⁵ It is difficult to identify many contexts in which such an object could have been produced or a time when Christian patrons could have had access to so much ivory and to such accomplished artists. One possibility is that the ivory and the carvers could have come from Zaragoza, from al-Mundhir. The manuscript's route is harder to discern, although such manuscripts circulated as part of gift exchanges between European monarchs and churchmen.⁴⁶ It could have been a gift from the count and

⁴² Anderson, 2014, 15-41.

⁴³ *AAAS*, 1992, 203, cat. no. 5 and 6; Rosser-Owen, 1999, 16-31.

⁴⁴ Mayr-Harting, 1991, 70-83 and pl. V.

⁴⁵ For an illustration, see Anderson, 2013, 75, fig. 43.

⁴⁶ *Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art*, 1984, cat. no. 27, 47-8; cat. no. 29, 50-51.

⁴⁰ *AMS*, 1993, cat. no. 74, 149-50; Valdés, 2005, 197-203; Kühnel, 1971, cats. no. 49 and 50.

⁴¹ Bango, 2007a, 46-47.

countess of Barcelona or more likely from Abbot Oliba, as he had a close friendship with Abbot Gauzlin of Fleury, who in turn had links with England.⁴⁷ A manuscript exchange would have been typical of such relationships based on *amicitia*. It is usually assumed that the cross was made at San Millán de la Cogolla, because later ivories were carved for that site, but it is also possible that the processional cross was made elsewhere. A further possibility is that this cross was carved in an archaic style alongside those later ivories in the second half of the eleventh century. Whenever or wherever this cross was made, it is remarkable not only for its size but also for the way that the ivory carvers adapted their repertoire to the form of the cross as well as finding a way of integrating the alien masks into the design. The cross-rib vaulting over both the square spaces at the east end of San Millán de la Cogolla may belong to the same period, although it is usually dated to the late tenth century.⁴⁸ Likewise, two idiosyncratic marble capitals, now mounted on the south door at San Millán, are of uncertain date and may not even have been carved for the church. Their unusual combination of flat acanthus leaves and finely incised decoration, including a band of pseudo-Visigothic rosettes, suggests a date in the early eleventh century, as does their use of animal heads for volutes.⁴⁹ Having constructed a web of influence that stretched from León to Barcelona, Sancho García of Castile did not live to exploit it, but died in 1017. He was buried, as planned, in Oña, leaving his son and heir, García Sánchez, a seven-year-old minor.

Ramon Borrell of Barcelona and Countess Ermessenda were to exploit their involvement with al-Andalus for much longer. In 1017,

al-Mundhir I, the Tujibid ruler of the now independent taifa kingdom of Zaragoza, persuaded the Catalans to support another Umayyad pretender, al-Murtada, in Granada.⁵⁰ The potential rewards must have been thought worthwhile, as the expedition opened the way to the riches of Almería.⁵¹ Ramon Borrell left considerable powers in the hands of Ermessenda, who went on to be regent for his young son Berenguer Ramon.⁵² The venture seems to have delivered a large amount of gold to the treasury of Barcelona, as in the same year Ermessenda ordered gold coins, *mancusos* in imitation of the Arab dinar, from a Jewish craftsman called Bonhom.⁵³ This was the first time that a ruler had produced stamped coinage in Barcelona for some three hundred years. During the minority of her son, Ermessenda had family support, as her brother Pere was bishop of Girona, but she also welcomed backing from an exiled adventurer, Roger de Tosny of Normandy. Although one source says that Roger married Ermessenda's daughter, Estefania, he returned to Normandy, where he used the wealth he had acquired to found Saint-Pierre at Conches around 1035. His travels inspired Ademar of Chabannes, at Saint-Martial in Limoges, to write tall tales about fighting and eating Saracens.⁵⁴ The reality was doubtless more complex, as Ermessenda's interests were closely tied to those of her Andalusí neighbours. Her name is incised in Latin and Arabic on an oval seal of blue chalcedony, which may give a better idea of the transactional and cultural life of Barcelona under her rule.⁵⁵ Although it is

50 Scales, 1994, 194-95; Petrus de Marca, 1998, 973-974.

51 Bonnassie, 1975, 375-76; Castro Guisasola, 2003, 86-90.

52 Wolff, 1989, 529-31.

53 Aurell, 1995, 233; Crusafont i Sabater, 1986, 51.

54 van Houts, 2000, 229.

55 Humphrey, 1993, 23; Wolff, 1989, 526; Bonnassie, 1990, 203-207; Pladevall i Font, 2000, 18.

47 Notter, 2004, 143-44; *Vie de Gauzli*, 1969; Clarke, 2012, 93, n. 59 and 94, para 57.

48 Bango, 2007, 47; Utrero, 2009a, 225-26.

49 Gómez-Moreno, 1919, 301-302.

hard to find specific evidence for trade between Christian and Muslim towns in the first half of the eleventh century, by 1011 Ramon and Ermessenda were enabling merchants who lived on the coast between Barcelona and the estuary of the river Llobregat to transport merchandise by sea from Muslim ports.⁵⁶ Pierre Bonnassie noted that by 1046 the old road across the Penedès was known as the *strata morisca* presumably because it was a trade route.⁵⁷ The northeast coasts were vulnerable to attack from pirates. In 1046 the monks of Lérins were carried off to be sold as slaves, but the Catalans helped Abbot Isarn of Saint-Victor in Marseille to negotiate their release. They achieved this by sending envoys to the *Saqā-liba* rulers of Tortosa and Denia, who controlled the corsairs and the slave markets.⁵⁸ 'Alī, the ruler of Denia, was well placed to deal with the Christian envoys, as he had spent most of his youth as a hostage, both at the court of Emperor Henry II and in the house of a Pisan merchant.⁵⁹

Wealth had an equally transformative effect on the churchmen of Catalonia. After surviving the expedition to Córdoba, Oliba, abbot of Sant-Michel-de-Cuxa and Santa Maria de Ripoll, visited Rome in 1011, and perhaps again in 1016-1017, to give the pope a share of the spoils and to reinforce the relationship established by his father. Oliba's role in the combat and its aftermath provides a somewhat different view of the abbot-bishop, more nuanced than the mythology that has been nurtured around him since the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ Changes in the inventories at his abbey of

Ripoll between 1008, 1047, and 1066 illustrate an influx of wealth from the second decade of the eleventh century.⁶¹ In 1008 the precious objects were limited to Oliba's stone seal, and some rock crystal, probably including a chess set. By 1047, according to the inventory taken after Oliba's death by his successor, the seven altars had luxurious fittings: three silver frontals; a main altar with gold, gems, and enamels; silver chalices; a silver ciborium on columns; two silver portative altars; two croziers, one with crystal and gold; and 192 books. In 1066 almost nothing had been added. The precious metalwork necessary to make or purchase these objects came from the campaigns in al-Andalus, probably as donations from the participants. One donor was the count of Besalú, Bernard Taillefer, Oliba's brother and veteran of the 1010 campaign, who gave gold and silver vessels to Ripoll on his death in 1020.⁶² He was buried at Ripoll, where they commemorated the anniversary of his death with prayers and a refection for the monks.⁶³ Oliba created an extensive library at Ripoll that mixed scientific and mathematical works from al-Andalus with theological texts from north of the Pyrenees. This remarkable resource probably led to the production of the three-volume Ripoll Bible in the mid-eleventh century, which Manuel Castiñeiras has argued was produced for the consecration of the church in 1032.⁶⁴ Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa and Vic probably had similar displays of sumptuary art, even if not such a large collection of books.

56 Bonnassie, 1990, 203; Wolff, 1989, 526; Humphrey, 1993, 21.

57 Bonnassie, 1990, 203-204.

58 Bruce, 2009, 19-20; Fletcher, 1994, 84.

59 Bruce, 2009, 22.

60 For the myth of Oliba, see Zimmermann, 2009, 341-53.

61 Codina i Giol, 2010, 227-30; Junyent, 1992: for 1008, no. 37, 43-45; for 1047, no. 9, 398-400; for 1066, no. 14, 414-15.

62 Junyent, 1992, no. 65, 99-103.

63 For a possible tradition of comital burial at Ripoll, see Junyent, 1992, 304-307.

64 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 157, 306-307; Castiñeiras, 2006b, 374-77, summarised in Castiñeiras, 2013, 129-30.

The taifa kingdoms

al-Andalus had lost all appearance of unity by 1020 and fragmented into independent taifa kingdoms, many ruled by high-ranking *Saqāliba*, slaves who had risen through the army of the 'Āmirids.⁶⁵ At one point there were over thirty, reflecting the complex administrative and military divisions of the Caliphate as well as its family and ethnic composition. Gradually most of the smaller units were absorbed into the larger and more powerful kingdoms of Badajoz, Toledo, Zaragoza, Granada, and Seville. As Cynthia Robinson and others have shown, a literary and artistic culture flourished in these courts that continued to outshine any cultural production in the Christian kingdoms of the north.⁶⁶ The kingdom of Zaragoza abutted the county of Barcelona, although the counts played only a minor role in its daily life. It had become a place of refuge for distinguished scholars and poets, especially those who had served the 'Āmirids, not only Ibn Darrāj but also Said al-Bagdadi, before he went to Denia and Sicily. The potential company included two doctors, the Jewish philosopher Marwan Yonah ben Yanah (c. 990-c. 1050), and the Arab poet Ibn Hasan al-Kattānī (d. 1029), who had served al-Mansur. Selomo ibn Gabirol (c. 1020-c. 1058), the great Jewish poet and philosopher known as 'Avicbron', was amongst those educated in Zaragoza, where he studied under the patronage of Yequtiel ben Ishaq, the secretary and vizir of al-Mundhir II (1029-1039).⁶⁷ Mundhir I and his successors began a programme of rebuilding across their kingdom in the third decade of the eleventh century. Excavations and surviving fragments give some idea of the ambition of this project. In

Tudela (c. 1020-22), the congregational mosque was enlarged to the size of the Great Mosque of Córdoba, with large rolled corbels, decorated with vegetal scrollwork, protruding from the walls. A minaret was raised, clad in horseshoe arches, *ajimez* frames, and stepped crenellations. One surviving Corinthian capital has large acanthus leaves in low relief that squeeze the caulicoles and volutes into a small upper space. The mosque's inspiration lay firmly in Córdoba, Madīnat al-Zahrā', and Qayrawan (Tunisia).⁶⁸ At Zaragoza, in the following year, the congregational mosque was turned into one of the largest in al-Andalus and given a high minaret that survived as a bell tower until the seventeenth century.⁶⁹ The ninth-century mihrab, apparently carved with a shell-niche from one piece of white marble, was reused in the new building. Some of the minaret's Corinthian capitals, now remounted on a later church tower, are of the abstract type used in al-Mansur's extension of the Great Mosque of Córdoba, but with low relief decoration applied to the acanthus leaves.⁷⁰ Almost nothing has survived of the immense portable wealth of the taifa kingdoms beyond fragments of silk, a silver perfume bottle from the tiny kingdom of Albarracín (southeast of Zaragoza), a few pieces of jewellery, some ceramic bowls, and two ivory caskets from the kingdom of Toledo.⁷¹ Even though we can be sure that the palaces of Zaragoza would have been full of fine objects of great value, this pitiful survival rate must of necessity distort our view. There is a similar lack of information about the craftsmen trained

65 Rosser-Owen, 2010, 31-33; Fierro, 1994; Anderson, 2013, 31-33.

66 Robinson, 2002.

67 Beech, 2008, 79-177.

68 Martínez-Aranaz, 1993-94, 137-39; Navas Cámara, 1994, 5-18; Navas Cámara 1995-96, 91-174.

69 Hernández Vera, 2004, 65-91.

70 Cabañero Subiza, 2002, 179-221.

71 *AAAI*S, 1992, cat. no. 16, 219; cat. no. 22, 226-28; cat. no. 23, 228-29; cat. no. 24, 230-31; cat. no. 31, 32 and 33, 238-240.

Figure 100 Cuenca, ivory casket, 1026, Santo Domingo de Silos

Image courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art

in caliphal techniques who were working for the ruler of Zaragoza, as they clearly had not all fled to North Africa or Sicily. Again, an exceptional piece of evidence comes from the taifa of Toledo. According to inscriptions that run below the lids, the two ivory caskets made for the rulers of Toledo, the Banū Dhū'l-Nūn, were carved in Cuenca.⁷² The earliest (fig. 100), with a date of 1029, was made by the 'servant' Muhammad ibn Zayyān and later reused as a reliquary in the abbey of Santo Domingo de Silos (19 x 34 x 21 cm).⁷³ 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Zayyān, probably his brother, carved the other (fig. 101), which has a date of 1046; found in Palencia, it is now in the Museo Nacional Arqueológico in Madrid (23 x

34 x 23.5 cm).⁷⁴ Although significant differences distinguish the caskets, they are sufficiently similar to suggest that this family of ivory carvers developed a characteristic approach that they employed for their patrons over decades. In both cases the ivory panels are attached to a wooden core, and the ivory is worked in a distinctive style, flatter, more repetitive and schematic than those of the caliphal period. Perhaps the carvers had to be economical with the ivory, and their carving technique had to be adapted for thinner panels. The iconography of the 1029 casket derives from the marble basins and ivories of the 'Āmirids. The panels are divided into three registers filled with animals, lions, bulls, hybrid beasts, winged griffins, and

72 Shalem, 1994, 24-38; Rosser-Owen, 2015, 39-64.

73 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 132, 273-76.

74 AAAIS, 1992, cat. no. 7, 204-206.

Figure 101 Cuenca, ivory "Palencia" casket, 1049 (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid)



Photograph: Ángel Martínez Levas. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. N.I. 57371

ibex. Two large affronted peacocks, their necks entwined, occupy the centre of the surviving side panel. Here the upper and lower registers are sub-divided at each end to form eight small compartments where lions attack gazelles. As on the 'Āmirid marble basin in Granada, the lion heads turn to show their features and manes. This hunting theme also dominates the upper and lower registers of the front and back panels. At the edges, four archers pull back their bows, whilst below the lock a horseman attacks a lion, flanked by two lions on the backs of bulls. The foliate scrollwork on the lid is quite dense, but spare vegetal decoration, with knots and small drilled circles, provides a background for the side panels. The 1046 Palencia casket is similar in form and uses a related repertoire of images. Pairs of addorsed animals and birds decorate the front and back of the casket, with lion hunters and archers aiming at gazelles on the sides. In each case they surround central

panels of flat open arabesques, whilst the lid uses strips of half-palmette scrolls to frame trapezoidal foliate panels. But the elements are more repetitive and constricted within their geometric divisions, a quality that is emphasised by the preference for framed panels over the horizontal registers of the earlier piece. A pyxis made for Ismāil, perhaps the son of the recipient of the 1029 casket, has been linked to the same group of carvers, as it employs analogous open foliate scrollwork.⁷⁵ Stylistic similarities have added a small group of other pieces to the potential output of the Cuenca carvers, including a set of fragments now mounted on the Beatitudes casket at San Isidoro in León, and a panel at the Victoria and Albert Museum (London).⁷⁶

Carving in Catalonia

Catalonia began to develop art and architecture of its own in tandem with the earliest known architectural projects in the taifa states. The first dated object is a chisel-carved marble slab of 1020, depicting Christ in Glory between angels and saints, at the church of Saint-Génis-des-Fontaines just to the north of the Pyrenees (Pyrénées-Orientales) (fig. 102). A crisp half-palmette scroll frames the rectangular slab, which Georges Gaillard compared to Andalusī carving on voussoirs at Madīnat al-Zahrā'.⁷⁷ An inscription runs along the top of the central panel, perhaps in imitation of an Islamic ivory box or marble basin. It names Abbot Wilielmus, who had ordered the works (*ista opera*) at Saint-Génis, and dates those works to

⁷⁵ Kühnel, 1971, 48, no. 42; Makariou, 1999, 127-35.

⁷⁶ Kühnel, 1971, 46-50, nos. 40-47; Rosser-Owen, 2010, 31-33.

⁷⁷ Gaillard, 1972a, 193; Klein, 1989, 121-59; Durliat, 1994, 129-213.

Figure 102 Saint-Génis-des-Fontaines (Pyrénées-Orientales), sculpted marble slab reset as a lintel

the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Robert the Pious, the Capetian king of France. This choice of regnal year, reflecting scribal practice in Catalonia, was not necessarily a statement of allegiance to that monarchy, which had little influence in the Roussillon at this period even if Catalonia remained nominally under the protection of the Frankish kings. This may be reflected in the main design of the slab, which has been compared to Carolingian ivories. In the centre a bearded figure of Christ in a figure-of-eight mandorla breaks into the line of the inscription. He is flanked by the alpha and omega of the Book of the Apocalypse (Apoc. 1:8) and sits on the rainbow from the apocalyptic vision, (Apoc. 4:3), unusually provided here with palmette spray terminals. While holding a book in his left hand, he blesses with his right. Two flying angels grip the mandorla firmly with both hands. To either side a row of small

horseshoe arches rest on Corinthian capitals, short columns, and bases; small trefoil leaves fill the spandrels between the arches. Six male figures, probably apostles, with prominent heads and relatively short bodies, stand under the six arches. The carving technique is assured so that, even though the relief remains low, Christ appears to emerge from the flat surface. When painted, the carving could have imitated precious metal, and the beading around the mandorla, on Christ's robes, on the wings and drapery of the angels, and on the architectural elements would have glittered. Although now used as a lintel, this slab may have originally functioned as liturgical furniture, perhaps as an altar frontal or retable, and the iconography certainly relates to that used on Carolingian altar frontals. The figures are more stylised than Carolingian examples, although small details, in particular the circles where the

fabric falls over Christ's knees, could have been inspired by more naturalistic Carolingian ivory carving. The small apostle figures have more in common with enamels on eighth-century bookcovers like the Lindau Gospels (Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.1). In summary, the iconography and style are archaic, and may have taken objects from the treasury at Saint-Génis as models, most likely bookcovers or reliquaries that combined metalwork and enamels. The small horseshoe arches and the half-palmette border are features that could have been seen in manuscripts and did not have to derive from Andalusí models, although they could be found on the Cuenca ivories. The half-palmette motif is too generic to denote a northern or southern formation for the craftsman, but the sure technique at this period does suggest a sculptor with caliphal training. As the processional cross of San Millán demonstrates, such carvers could copy a range of models and adapt forms with great facility. Although others see an unbroken Carolingian tradition behind this carving, this is a highly original piece, most likely made possible by the arrival of a sculptor from al-Andalus who contributed his epigraphic habit and his crisp vegetal carving.⁷⁸ It may even be possible to suggest a scenario in which such an artisan could have come to Saint-Génis. In the later tenth century, Saint-Génis had received substantial patronage from Gausfred I, count of Rosselló (Roussillon) and Empúries. Empúries was inherited by Hug I, one of the survivors of the 1010 Córdoba campaign, whilst his elder brother received Rosselló. When the brother died in 1014, Hug tried to seize the territory from his young nephew, Gausfred II, and might have succeeded except that Abbot Oliba established a peace in 1020.⁷⁹ The hearing (*placitum*) and agreement are less well documented than

many others in Catalonia around the same time, so the terms of the settlements and any judicial penalties involved or gifts to secure future good behaviour are unknown.⁸⁰ Such gifts could take many forms and in another case, in 1020, the counter-gift was the institution of liturgical commemoration for Ramon Borrell, count of Barcelona, at the monastery of Sant Cugat.⁸¹ On this basis it is possible to speculate that the exceptional carving at Saint-Génis-des-Fontaines might have been commissioned with funds and expertise provided as part of the settlement of the dispute, perhaps even linked to an anniversary for Gausfred I or for his elder son. Certainly the veterans of the 1010 Córdoba campaign involved in this dispute – Oliba; his brother, Bernat of Besalú who had supported Hug I of Empúries; and Hug himself – would have had the opportunity to source marble carvers from the south. The iconography and style of the panel fits with such an interpretation in two ways. First, the iconography proclaimed the ordered rule of God mediated through his saints, the ideology behind the settlement of such disputes, which often masked more pragmatic church interests. Secondly, the carving employed an emphatically archaic Carolingian style, which appealed to notions of lost Carolingian law and order, part of the vocabulary available to Oliba and his contemporaries in more private disputes, as here, and in the wider Peace of God assemblies that he was soon to promote.⁸²

An analogous, slightly smaller, slab was mounted again as a lintel at the nearby church of Saint-André-de-Sorède. This slab is not dated by an inscription, although stylistic and technical similarities assign it to the Saint-Génis

78 Lyman, 1978, 115-27.

79 Kosto, 1999, 142-144.

80 Davies, 2010, 217-37; Bijsterveld, 2000, 123-56.

81 Junyent, 1992, 98-99, no. 64; Gil i Roman, 2004, 360, no. 86.

82 Bowman, 1999, 99-129.

Figure 103 Saint-André-de-Sorède (Pyrénées-Orientales), sculpted marble altar

sculptor or someone working very closely with him. Other small plaques and fragments decorate the façade at Saint-André, featuring seraphim and two evangelist symbols, and inside the church a polylobed marble altar table is carved with the same technique (fig. 103). Taken together, these pieces indicate that there was once an ensemble of marble carving in the sanctuary. Such a group might also make sense of the reference to ‘works’ in the plural made in the inscription at Saint-Génis. The design on the panel at Saint-André is broadly similar to that at Saint-Génis, but it has an almond-shaped mandorla, and two seraphim replace the male figures either side of Christ. The half-palmette border twists and turns to

enliven the scene. That border also links the lintel slab to the carving on the altar table, as the leaves are similarly delineated, especially in the use of drilled circles where the leaf tips meet the stems. This feature makes the carving at Saint-André more obviously indebted to Andalusí work, and closer to the Cuenca ivories, than that at Saint-Génis, although the slab at Saint-André is usually dated a few years later.

The marble altar table at Saint-André is part of a diverse group of marble altar tables. Paul Deschamps, writing in 1925, maintained that there had been an unbroken tradition of marble carving based around Saint-Pons-de-Thomières (Hérault). It had carved altar tables using local marble, and production had peaked in the

tenth century.⁸³ Marcel Durliat saw two stylistically distinct groups of marble altar tables, one found around Narbonne dated to the ninth or early tenth century, and a second in Roussillon and Catalonia. He defined his second group as stylistically distinct and thought them more 'hispano-mauresque' than the Narbonne group, whilst also admitting that the motifs were generic across the Mediterranean. He also viewed this Roussillon group in a context that belonged with the flow of Andalusí gold and 'the development of exchange along the route that constituted the principal artery of relations between Christian Europe and Iberian Islam'.⁸⁴ In many cases the slabs may have been Roman *spolia* and not quarried for the purpose. One of the most important examples on Deschamps's spectrum of altars is the marble altar at Rodez cathedral (Rouergue), as its style of cusping and foliate decoration, as well as its location, places it in Durliat's second group, though Deschamps dates it to the tenth century. He based his dating on the name of a bishop, Deusdedit, which is carved on the Rodez altar, where it asserts that he had ordered the altar to be made. The name Deusdedit was not unusual, however, and Rodez had two bishops with that name in the tenth century.⁸⁵ In the early eleventh century none of the bishops of Rodez are named until a Bishop Arnaldus from 1015; in 1031 the post was vacant and no other bishop is recorded until Peter in 1053. This means that the records are missing for three decades of the early eleventh century, when there could well have been another Deusdedit in the See. It is thus entirely possible that this altar may be better dated to the eleventh century along with its stylistic counterparts. This group includes surviving examples at Girona (consecrated 1038); two

now at Sainte-Marie in Quarante (Hérault), a church linked to the counts of Narbonne; one at the cathedral of Elne (1069), perhaps funded by a donation from Ermessenda of Barcelona; and the altar from the Romanesque period at Saint-Sernin in Toulouse, usually related to the consecration of 1096. All exhibit a similar highly accomplished carving technique, where the use of the chisel and sometimes the drill produced very crisp outlines. Ermessenda of Barcelona may have commissioned the altar table at Girona to go with the gold altar frontal that she funded in 1038 with 300 ounces of gold to mark the consecration of the cathedral.⁸⁶ The foliate motifs on that altar are sparser and recall the strap-like leaf carving on the Cuenca ivory casket of Santo Domingo de Silos (1029) and on the Narbonne pyxis.⁸⁷ A large silver-gilt casket, now in the treasury of Girona Cathedral, may have been donated at the same time, although its presence cannot be documented at the cathedral in the Middle Ages.⁸⁸ Made in 976 for Hishām II with elaborate repoussé and niello decoration, it could have been amongst the possessions that the caliph sold in an attempt to hold on to the throne. It could even have formed part of the payment for the Catalan mercenaries in 1010, but equally it may not have reached Girona until much later. Ermessenda was the daughter of Roger 'the Old' of Carcassonne and his countess, Adelaide of Rouergue, who between them had power over a considerable territory to the south and west of their citadel and over the archbishopric of Narbonne.⁸⁹ During her regency, Ermessenda had her own dispute with Hug of Empúries, and

83 Deschamps, 1925; Jalabert, 1967, Pl.14-20.

84 Durliat, 1966, 75.

85 Dufour, 1989, 69-89.

86 Junyent, 1992, no. 134, 230; Castiñeiras, 2007, 135, n. 54.

87 Deschamps, 1925, 150.

88 *AAAI*S, 1992, cat. no. 9, 208-209; Ruiz Souza, 2001, 32.

89 Humphrey, 1993, 18.

divisions between the families were not finally resolved until a marriage in 1027. If the marble carving at Saint-Génis and Saint-André is put to one side, it becomes apparent that Ermessenda had circumstantial links to many of the other sites where the carved marble altars are found, to Girona and Elne and, through her mother, to Rodez and Narbonne. Of course, there may once have been many more marble altar tables of this type, but on the basis of the available evidence, it is possible that Ermessenda may have controlled the carvers after 1027. The work remained a regional phenomenon, and the craftsmen probably stayed north of the Pyrenees where they could have access to Roman slabs of marble and quarries.

Experiments in Building

In the decade after the 1010 Córdoba expedition, some major Catalan buildings were apparently still in need of repair. A document of 1015 talks of the rain coming in so badly at the cathedral of Girona that it threatened to prevent the celebration of the liturgy. The canons had to sell the church of Sant Daniel to Countess Ermessenda for 100 ounces of gold to be able to afford the repairs.⁹⁰ Ermessenda founded a convent at Sant Daniel the following year, and was to give donations for substantial rebuilding work on the cathedral.⁹¹ Even allowing for some rhetorical hyperbole to emphasise the importance of the work done by Bishop Pere on the cathedral, this is not a trope and may well give a true impression of the state of many buildings in Catalonia during the first years of the eleventh century. After the death of 'Abd al-Malik in October 1008, documents attest to conspicuous efforts to revive foundations and

promote further Benedictine reform. In 1009, Count Ramon Borrell and Ermessenda held a meeting to restore canonical life at the cathedral of Barcelona and provide a refectory.⁹² Many of the fortifications owned by counts and bishops may have also been repaired around this time. Abbot Oliba's brother, Count Guifre of Cerdanya and his wife, Guisla, concentrated on the foundation of Saint-Martin-du-Canigou (fig. 104). Mt. Canigou, now emblematic for Catalans, was a remote and well-defended site on the north side of the Pyrenees, beyond the reach of Muslim raiding, which may explain why they were already considering rebuilding

Figure 104 Saint-Martin-du-Canigou (Pyrénées-Orientales)



⁹⁰ Montsalvatje i Fosas, 1981, 310-11.

⁹¹ Marquès i Planagumà, 1997, 61-62.

⁹² Petrus de Marca, 1998, 967-971.

the church on that site in 1001.⁹³ A consecration is recorded on the day of the vigil of St. Martin in 1009, a triple dedication to St. Martin, the Virgin, and St. Michael enacted by Oliba, bishop of Elne, and witnessed by Abbot Oliba.⁹⁴ As Count Menendo González and his wife, Toda, had done in Galicia c. 1008, the count and countess of Cerdanya gave a silver chalice with a paten, together with a silver censer, vestments for the priest, and endowments of land.⁹⁵ A strong family tradition lay behind these donations. Guifre and Oliba's uncle, Miró Bonfill, count of Besalú and bishop of Girona, was the founder of Sant Pere in Besalú (977) and of the chapter in the same town. A strategic benefactor of important monasteries in the region, on both sides of the Pyrenees, he also consecrated Cuxa in 974 and Ripoll in 977.⁹⁶ Guifre and Oliba's father, Oliba Cabreta, count of Cerdanya and Besalú, had retired at the end of his life to the Italian monastery of St. Benedict at Montecassino, a decision that encapsulated his interest in that region.⁹⁷ The 1009 consecration of Canigou says that a priest and monk called Sclua, who would be abbot from 1014, had raised the structure and directed the work, but says nothing about the masons employed.⁹⁸ Building continued, and there may have been another consecration in 1026, so it is difficult to know how much was completed by 1009. It is possible that the groin-vaulted eastern bays of the hall crypt belong to this phase, whereas the western bays, barrel vaulted with transverse arches, are later. The eastern bays of the crypt, built

into the bare rock, were supported on roughly carved inverted pyramidal capitals and reused monolithic shafts, but the western bays rest on piers. An upper church, also with three aisles, was constructed over the hall crypt, and the support required for this structure may have determined the strengthening of the eastern part of the crypt and the sturdier piers of the western section. It is also possible that the crypt in the rock was originally intended to be the church, in the manner of San Millán de la Cogolla, and that the much grander two-storied structure entailed the redeployment of the monolithic columns. Indeed, as Marcel Durliat argued, the triple dedication of 1009 implies one altar at the east end of each aisle.⁹⁹ The separate dedications of the crypt to the Virgin and the upper church to St. Martin were later assignments. Finer carving of the granite capitals in the upper church, with large palmettes and lions, also indicates the presence of a more skilled craftsman by that stage. The barrel-vaulted arcade of the upper church has long been compared to the undated 'Byzantine' church of *La Cattolica* in Stilo (Calabria), and Canigou's cave-like aesthetic in both the upper and lower churches shows awareness of such precedents in mountain locations.¹⁰⁰ There is nothing immediately visible at Canigou to suggest an interest in the architecture of late tenth-century buildings like the church at Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa. Yet Edson Armi has shown that some of the building techniques used at Canigou, for example, lengthened voussoirs, could have derived from buildings like Cuxa, as could the *petit appareil* walls.¹⁰¹ He has indicated how Canigou's flat walls employed the 'continuous order', which he defines as an elevation where 'the supported part (the vault

93 Junyent, 1992, no. 41, 54-56; Petrus de Marca, 1998, 961-962, 964-965, 971-972; Whitehill, 1941, 25-31.

94 Barral i Altet, 2011, 36; Vergnolle, 2009, 133-143; 971-972; Junyent, 1992, doc. 41, 54-56.

95 Petrus de Marca, 1998, 971-72.

96 Salrach Marés, 1974, 57-81; Salrach Marès, 1989, 108-109; Klein, 1993, 186.

97 Barral i Altet, 2009b, 178-79.

98 Vergnolle, 2009, 143.

99 Durliat, 1950, 7-18.

100 Whitehill, 1941, 28-29.

101 Armi, 1975, 175-88.

arch) and the supporting part (the pier) are continuous and in effect one and the same'.¹⁰² That is they lack the highly articulated elevations found in northern Romanesque, even if they perform the same functions. Sant Miquel at Terrassa, discussed in Chapter 5, could have provided a model for the use of columns with vaulting, although the result at Canigou is much heavier. Eliane Vergnolle has recently emphasised possible Italian precedents for Canigou, in particular San Vincenzo at Galliano, founded in 1007 and consecrated by the influential Bishop Aribert of Milan. In any event, Saint-Martin-du-Canigou does not typify Catalan architecture of the eleventh century. As Manuel Castiñeiras has said, it was not a paradigm for the future, but the site of early experiments, '*un primer laboratorio de pruebas*'.¹⁰³ In one feature it was not a leader, as only later in the century was a tall bell-tower built over the entrance to the abbey, with a chapel to St. Michael the Archangel on the first storey. The fashion for bell-towers, like the earlier transept towers at Cuxa, may have been in part a response to the minarets of Zaragoza and a celebration of a newfound freedom to ring the bells, not only to structure the liturgical day but also to celebrate religious and other events such as the release of captives.¹⁰⁴

As the earlier part of this chapter demonstrated, Catalonia acquired massive wealth in the second decade of the eleventh century, which occasioned new confidence. New architectural projects followed. Abbot-bishop Oliba worked with Ermessenda and the Counts of Barcelona and Osona to reconstruct defences and churches up the river Llobregat, in areas that had suffered especially in the raids of 'Abd

al-Malik.¹⁰⁵ In 1020 he was personally involved in the restoration of the See of Manresa. Jeffrey Bowman has elucidated the significance of the ceremony that Oliba summoned and the charter that recorded it.¹⁰⁶ The Catalan clergy and aristocracy, including the count and countess of Barcelona, pooled their memories of the See, with the Visigothic law that had underpinned it, in a communal act of renewal. Only two years after the last Catalan mercenary expedition to the south, the families of Catalonia were working to reinvent their territories through the joint leadership of those family members who held secular lordships and their brothers who controlled the bishoprics. Building was at the heart of this process. The architecture of Catalonia during this period, north and south of the Pyrenees, has been placed in a category that also encompasses buildings found across southern Europe. This diverse but linked group of buildings used to be known as First Romanesque, the name given to it in the 1920s by Puig i Cadafalch, who was the first to identify the phenomenon.¹⁰⁷ Today these buildings are more often known as Early Southern Romanesque to reflect their geographic distribution. The group has come to be defined by a cluster of technical similarities: the use of small regularly laid building stones (*petit appareil*); basilical plans; barrel vaulting in the nave with transverse arches, often combined with groin-vaulting in the side aisles; and the use of piers and not columns. There is a lack of sculptural decoration, and only tall niches articulate internal apses. Externally, pilaster strips (*lesenes*) are linked by a blind arcade under the cornice, and sometimes a band of sawtooth. The group is also known for the use of domes on squinches at the crossing, which rise into octagonal towers,

102 Armi, 1975, 175-176.

103 Castiñeiras, 2006a, 351.

104 Arnold, 2012, 112-18; Lappin, 2002, 280-82.

105 Kosto, 2001, 158-59.

106 Bowman, 2010, 173-80.

107 Fernie, 2014, 5-9 and 55-59; Puig i Cadafalch, 1930.

and especially for the many storied bell-towers that may be attached or stand slightly apart. Many of these buildings were covered in lime plaster inside and out. Large scale painting programmes survive from c. 1100, but in the earlier eleventh century decoration may have been limited either to fictive masonry, similar to that found in San Miguel de Celanova in the late tenth century, or to foliate, geometric, and zoomorphic patterns. A fragment of painting was found in the 1990s on the masonry at Santa María at Ripoll, preserved behind the later twelfth-century façade, showing that the exterior had previously been painted.¹⁰⁸

In practice the variations within this group are considerable, as will be evident from the material presented here, and many break the supposed rules of 'Early Southern Romanesque'. The coherence of the group is increasingly questioned and along with it the idea of 'Lombard' masons that has traditionally been used to explain the geographic spread of these buildings. According to this theory, a group of masons from North Italy migrated and disseminated this 'style' especially in Catalonia, but also to the northeast, south, and east. Joan Duran-Porta has recently refuted the idea of an influx of Lombard masters to Catalonia in the early eleventh century.¹⁰⁹ The surname 'Lombard' existed, but there is no evidence to tie the men who used it to the building profession. This leaves us with a phenomenon, a notable advance in the amount and the ambition of building across the area identified by Puig i Cadafalch, but no explanation for it. Duran-Porta proposes a return to ideas of intellectual and cultural exchange across a clerical and monastic network and use of 'the Roman substrate', including Italian brick

architecture.¹¹⁰ This has much to recommend it, even if the details remain elusive. It does not yet answer, for example, questions about the timing of this resurgence or the source of the expertise that enabled Roman practices to be fully understood and re-invented. Edson Armi has looked at 'Early Southern Romanesque' building from a technical point of view and from that examination also emerges the engagement of the masons with ancient building techniques and a facility with vaulting based on experience with brick building, which informs the decoration of surfaces, the pilaster strips, blind arcading, and bands of sawtooth.¹¹¹ He has demonstrated how the combination of niches and corbel tables had a structural, and not merely a decorative, purpose.¹¹² Elsewhere at this period, corbels were developing in a very different way in the East and in North Africa, looking back to experiments at Córdoba and the tiny mosque at Toledo and forward to the invention of new corbel forms including *muqarnas*.¹¹³

Although Italian models and brickwork seem to stand behind much Catalan building at this period, there is surprising little documentary material to support the idea of close links between Catalan and Italian families, or institutions, after the late tenth century. No Italian comital marriage is recorded before that of Robert Guiscard's daughter, Mathilda, to Berenguer II of Barcelona in the late eleventh century, which might in any case be better described as a Norman alliance. Pisan and Genoan trade was very important by the early twelfth century, but in the first half of the eleventh century, Muslim traders more often controlled these seas. Liturgical studies

108 Castiñeiras, 2013, 123-24, Fig. 11.

109 Duran-Porta, 2009, 99-119.

110 Duran-Porta, 2009, 105 and 117.

111 Armi, 2000, 97.

112 Armi, 2000, n. 2, 112.

113 Edwards, 1999, 68-95; Draper, 2005, 14-15.

also yield nothing helpful in this context. Oliba travelled to Rome, but his networks of *amicitia* were with Fleury and Cluny.¹¹⁴ Even Oliba's mortuary roll, according to the surviving records, circulated in Catalonia, to Saint-Victor in Marseilles; to the county of Anjou, including Tours via Poitiers; and thence to Burgundy, the cathedral of Autun and the monastery of Cluny; and to the Auvergne, to the cathedral of Le Puy and the abbey of Le Monastier.¹¹⁵ Given the political, military and economic connections between Barcelona and its taifa neighbours, especially Zaragoza, the commonly held view that amounts to a kind of cultural wall between the Islamic and Christian realms seems untenable. Barcelona and the other Christian kingdoms had everything to gain from interaction with the taifa kingdoms, especially now that they were no longer part of an aggressive and militarily dominant Caliphate. The taifas also had expertise in brick building and vaulting. Gold, precious objects, and textiles reached Catalonia from the taifa kingdoms, so it is possible also to envisage the acquisition of artistic and architectural expertise, probably in the form of craftsmen themselves, via the same routes. This possibility should be borne in mind throughout this consideration of standing buildings from the period.

The corpus of Catalan buildings is distorted by the survival of a large number of rural churches that were never rebuilt, and the loss of the major cathedrals in Barcelona, Girona, and Vic, where most discussions have to rely on archaeology. Ermessenda's favoured cathedral at Girona has been the subject of a major new study by Marc Sureda, who has brought together the archaeological and documentary record to show that the cathedral was built over the Roman forum and early Christian

structures.¹¹⁶ Although donations for its repair had been made in 1015, the new building was consecrated by Oliba of Vic, with Eribau of Urgell and other bishops, only in 1038, and was probably not finished until c. 1060 or even later. The consecration charter compared the sustaining patronage of Ermessenda, of her brother Pere (Peter), and her husband Count Ramon, to the Lord's sustenance during the fearful return journey to the Promised Land in the Old Testament, itself a prefiguration of the promise of heaven.¹¹⁷ This was surely a clear statement of the confidence that the Catalans now dared to have, as the prospect of a resurgent al-Andalus faded. Ermessenda was to be buried at Girona in 1058 and her son Ramon Berenguer II in 1082.¹¹⁸ Most of the eleventh-century building was destroyed when the present Gothic cathedral was built, but one of the two bell-towers survives, now known as the 'tower of Charlemagne'. The recovered plan shows that the cathedral had a single nave with a slightly projecting transept. At the west end there was a monumental structure, perhaps originally defensive. The plan of this western block was symmetrical with a central body flanked by two square structures, possibly towers that projected beyond the line of the transept. If there was an upper level, as is likely, the western complex may also have had a liturgical function. Sureda has set Girona's western structure in a wide European context, citing a range of buildings not only from Ottonian Germany, but also across the Low Countries, Alsace, Burgundy, Normandy, and Lorraine.¹¹⁹ This study of the structure has helped to illuminate Francesca Español's earlier work on the liturgical use of the western spaces at

¹¹⁴ Barral i Altet, 2010, 212–26.

¹¹⁵ Dufour, 1977, 20.

¹¹⁶ Sureda, 2004, 69–109; Sureda, 2009, 221–36.

¹¹⁷ Castiñeiras, 2013, 123 n. 15, 139–40.

¹¹⁸ Español, 1996, 73.

¹¹⁹ Sureda, 2008, 201–85.

Girona, as preserved in the fourteenth-century customary.¹²⁰ As a result this western building emerges as a symbolic space, earthly Jerusalem below and celestial Jerusalem above, suitable for a liturgy that had its roots in Carolingian performance, as the focus for both burial and baptism.

Although burials have left more traces, it may be that baptism was just as important a function in the early eleventh century when conversion to Christianity might have seemed advantageous. Even if life in the taifa kingdoms was too good for Muslims to leave and convert, captives and slaves might opt for conversion as it led to a measure of freedom. In the funerary and commemorative liturgies, prayers for the souls of the dead would evoke the Resurrection embodied by the architectural structure. These western spaces also operated as theatrical entrances, and at Girona, according to the customary, two sets of steps, one into the narthex and a second change of level into the church itself, were used to great effect during the Easter liturgy. A procession climbed to the chapel dedicated to the Holy Cross and the Holy Sepulchre on the upper level, as a place for the reconciliation of penitents on Holy Thursday, perhaps in imitation of Carolingian liturgical practices.¹²¹ Eduardo Carrero has also identified processional liturgies that relate to the pilgrimage sites of the Holy Land in the complex of churches belonging to Eribau, bishop of Urgell, three of which were repaired or built between 1035 and 1040.¹²² Similar stational systems had been developed across Carolingian Europe and beyond.¹²³ Barcelona Cathedral, dedicated in 1058, was doubtless one of the most important

buildings of the period, but even less of it has survived than at Vic and Girona, and excavations are lacking. It too probably had a western structure where, as Español has argued, Count Ramon Borrell was buried, and his daughter-in-law, Sancha of Castile.¹²⁴

The three main projects completed by Oliba, abbot of Cuxa and Ripoll, and bishop of Vic from 1017, also created structures suitable for elaborate processional liturgies. He added liturgical spaces at both abbeys and rebuilt the cathedral of Sant Pere at Vic, consecrated in 1038, the same year as Girona Cathedral. As the church at Ripoll was largely destroyed in the nineteenth century by a fire and neo-classical restoration, it is unclear if Oliba completely rebuilt it *c.* 1032 or kept much of the earlier structure. In any event, by the end of his abbacy Santa Maria at Ripoll had seven apses across an extended transept and five aisles in the nave.¹²⁵ If the nineteenth-century archaeologist Rogent was correct in identifying alternating piers and columns at Ripoll – and his opinion has divided scholars – the side arcades may have referenced not only St. Peter's in Rome, but also German late-tenth-century buildings, including Gernrode and Drübeck.¹²⁶

At Vic only the separate bell-tower and the hall crypt survive, but recent archival work has identified a seventeenth-century plan that concurs with excavations to show that the wide transept across the single nave was straight, and that the two chapels in each arm of the transept were square and embedded in the width of the wall.¹²⁷ Another excavation at Vic has revealed the foundations of a

120 Español, 1996, 73-77; for continuity in customaries, see Malone, 2000, 291.

121 Rabe, 1995, 135.

122 Carrero, 2010, 251-91.

123 Gittos, 2013, 106.

124 Español, 1996, 60-63.

125 Lorés, 2009, 205-19.

126 Barral i Altet, 1995, 43; Castiñeiras, 2006a, 352; Fernie, 2014, 58.

127 Adan, 1996, 21-24; Sureda, 2010, 61-76; Subiranas, 2009, 187-203; Barral i Altet, 1979.

Figure 105 Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa (Pyrénées-Orientales)

small rotunda with a western apse. This small structure, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, was built opposite the west door of the cathedral and over a necropolis.¹²⁸ At Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa, Oliba kept most of the tenth-century church but may have altered the east end. He built two substantial bell-towers, one over the end of each transept, although only the south tower survives (fig. 105). To the west he added a large subterranean ring crypt with a massive central pier, described by the monk García in a sermon of 1040 for the anniversary of the consecration, when it was dedicated to the 'Virgin of the Manger'.¹²⁹ García also said that two chapels were dedicated to the archangels Gabriel and Raphael, and these may be the two

vaulted rooms that link the crypt to another three-aisled and barrel-vaulted space. Above the crypt there used to be a chapel dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Barral i Altet has argued for direct Roman inspiration for these Mariological spaces, specifically from the Pantheon and its dedication to Santa Maria ad Martyres.¹³⁰

The design of the Pantheon in Rome remains the prime conceptual precedent, and if Oliba went to Rome in 1011, the transmission of the idea is unproblematic. Most churchmen of status visited Rome in this period and, in their correspondence and meetings, doubtless discussed the ways in which they might emulate and reinvent it. Gerardo Boto, on the other hand, has emphasised Oliba's contacts with the north.¹³¹ As Oliba did not travel north,

¹²⁸ Subiranas, 2009, 187-203.

¹²⁹ Petrus de Marca, 1998, 1072-1082; Palazzo, 2009, 77-89; Codina, 2009, 65-76.

¹³⁰ Barral i Altet, 2006, 63-75.

¹³¹ Boto, 2007, 281-319; Boto, 2006, 170-75.

as far as we know, he and his Catalan circle would have relied on descriptions, and perhaps sketches, for knowledge of the northern buildings.¹³² Oliba could also have been familiar with reinventions of the Pantheon through the Benedictine network, which included William of Volpiano, abbot of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon. His rotunda in Dijon, based on the Pantheon, was dedicated to the Virgin Mary in 1018, and an addition to the basilica was consecrated two years earlier. Carolyn Malone's exposition of its liturgical function during the Christmas period and the feast of the Purification of the Virgin helps to illuminate the way in which the rotundas at Cuxa and Vic were used.¹³³ She has rich documentary material, which is lacking for most of the Catalan sites, and her analysis of it shows how processional liturgy brought life to the spaces at Dijon and to their generous supply of altars and relics, including altars dedicated to St. Michael and to the Holy Trinity in the highest chapels. This helps to put the significance of consecration dates in a different context, one that emphasises the importance of the altars and the liturgy that attends them. These dates may not always imply extensive rebuilding, let alone the inception or completion of projects. An important new relic could be sufficient to justify the consecration of a new altar. Although Rodulfus Glaber's contemporary eulogy of William of Volpiano and his buildings has distorted our view of this period, it may nonetheless evoke the milieu in which Oliba of Vic, Pere of Girona, and the bishops of Barcelona elaborated their processional liturgies and built spaces for such display.¹³⁴

The best-documented relationship involving Oliba is his friendship with Gauzlin, abbot of Fleury and archbishop of Bourges, which

entailed an exchange of letters, valuable gifts from Oliba worked in gold and silver, and monks travelling from Oliba to Gauzlin.¹³⁵ It is not known what Oliba received in return, but given Gauzlin's energetic building programme, it may have included advice on building and perhaps the loan of craftsmen. Gauzlin's secular network included Fulk Nerra, duke of Anjou, who built several castles, including the technically advanced stone keeps at Langeais and Loches.¹³⁶ Gauzlin's painter, Nivardus, is described as coming from 'the region of the Lombards', but it is unclear how he acquired him. An exchange of a painter and a mason between Oliba and Gauzlin is an idea that might explain much, but it cannot be verified. Oliba developed a similar relationship of *amicitia* with Abbot Odilo of Cluny based on an exchange of letters and gifts.¹³⁷ Oliba's wealth, probably acquired originally from Córdoba, and his influence with the comital families, had put him in a strong position to deal on equal terms with some of the most senior churchmen in France.

Piers were the most common forms of support in Catalan architecture, but two of Oliba's major building projects, Ripoll and Vic, used columns with capitals. Other isolated surviving capitals, for example at Sant Mateu de Bages, indicate that some churches near Vic also employed this method of support.¹³⁸ Fragments of other sculptural decoration survive at Ripoll and at Girona with interlace and foliate scrollwork, although their location

135 *Vie de Gauzli*, 1969, para. 54; Head, 1990, 278; see Zimmermann, 2003, 791-92 for the exchange of letters with acrostic verses.

136 For Gauzlin and Fulk, see Head, 1990, 276; for the fortifications, see Stalley, 1999, 89-90, Impey, 1998, and Vergnolle, 1996, 229-34.

137 Rosenwein, 1989, 195 and n. 166.

138 For Sant Mateu de Bages, see *CEC*, 1999, 367, no.108 and no. 109 (Museu Comarcal de Manresa).

132 Barral i Altet, 2010, 212-26.

133 Malone, 2000, 285-317.

134 Rodulfus Glaber, 1989, 3.5.16, 120-22.

Figure 106 Vic Cathedral, crypt

within the buildings remains uncertain.¹³⁹ The form of the crypt at Vic (fig. 106) looks towards the hall crypts of Ottonian Germany, but the Corinthian capitals are very different from anything found in the Ottonian or Salian Empire, or indeed at Saint-Martin-du-Canigou. Oliba's capitals have abstract acanthus leaves that immediately recall examples from Córdoba, in al-Mansur's extension to the Great Mosque and at Madīnat al-Zahrā, as well as those in the taifa kingdoms, including Zaragoza. Georges Gaillard saw these capitals as reused *spolia* from the end of the tenth century, whilst Felix Hernández thought they were products of the early eleventh century; both views still have their adherents.¹⁴⁰ At Santa María de Ripoll, the capitals are now remounted or exist as isolated

fragments. They are not identical, and this very diversity argues for the later date. One example uses downturned acanthus leaves as volutes, a feature not typical of caliphal capitals, although such leaves have been found on relief carving at Madīnat al-Zahrā. Similar forms begin to appear on capitals carved in the taifa of Zaragoza in the first decades of the eleventh century, and examples are now preserved in the tower of Santa María Magdalena (Zaragoza).¹⁴¹ Of the two capitals from the bell-tower at Sant Mateu de Bages, south of Vic, one is close to the Córdoba examples, whilst the other has large flat lobed acanthus leaves around the lower tier, divided by prominent spiral wrappings of the caulicoles, surmounted by unwieldy volutes. A taste for such top-heavy capitals can be found in other taifa kingdoms, including two now

¹³⁹ Sureda, 2009, 236.

¹⁴⁰ Gaillard, 1972a, 183-197; Hernández, 1930, 21-49.

¹⁴¹ Cabañero Subiza, 2002, 214.

Figure 107 Vic Cathedral, crypt, capital**Figure 108 Córdoba, Gran Capitán, capital
(Museo Arqueológico Nacional,
Madrid)**

in the Museo de Jaén. But the only set of such capitals found *in situ* is that in the crypt at Vic. As Barral i Altet has observed, these capitals are worked in local stone without a chisel, and lack the kind of sharp detailing to be expected from Andalusi work.¹⁴² It is as if the only carver available was the one who roughed out the shape of the capital, perhaps with a sculptor's pick, not the one who did the fine chisel work.¹⁴³ The most distinct feature is the way that the volutes are sometimes enlarged and, more inventively, turned into pairs of lions or birds whose hindquarters form the curl of the volutes, whilst their heads almost meet where the fleuron would otherwise be (fig. 107). Two more accomplished capitals, found in the Casa del Gran Capitán at Córdoba and now in the Museo Arqueológico at Madrid, offer a parallel for the zoomorphic aspect of the capitals at Vic (fig. 108). Two further capitals were found at

Cornellà de Llobregat (fig. 109), near the estuary of the river Llobregat, in an area where trade was active in the early eleventh century. These capitals have delicate chiselled relief decoration on some of the acanthus leaves, a technique also found on the capitals from Zaragoza (fig. 110); the volutes with downturned leaves are similar to those at Ripoll, and the spiral caulicoles recall the examples at Bages.¹⁴⁴ Although the evidence is fragmentary, it is sufficient to suggest that Oliba had access to some carvers, although not to those as skilled as the sculptors who worked for the rulers of Zaragoza or perhaps the counts of Barcelona. The scarcity of expertise makes for uneven and sporadic production at this period.

A major candidate for inclusion in this group of capitals is Sant Pere de Rodes. Close to the *Via Augusta*, the church claimed to hold relics of St. Peter and had great potential as a pilgrimage site. The crypt, hollowed out of the rock to

¹⁴² Barral i Altet, 2009b, 156.

¹⁴³ Wootton, 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Pagès i Paretas, 1983, 66-81.

Figure 109 Cornellà de Llobregat (Barcelona), capital



form a passage, probably held the relics. Yet this church presents great challenges: not only does its cartulary not survive, but its archaeology is complex because of the solid rock on which it stands. There is evidence for more than one campaign and a range of building techniques from *opus spicatum* in the apse to ashlar in the nave arcades. The standing building required considerable levelling of the site and additional support for the north side of the nave; any earlier building was almost completely demolished in the process.¹⁴⁵ Reconciling the scant documentary record with the phases of the standing building is beset with difficulties. The only evidence for a consecration date of 1022 is a late copy of a letter from Abbot Pere to Pope

¹⁴⁵ Adell Gisbert, 1996-1997, 1425.

Figure 110 Zaragoza, Aljafería Palace, capital



Benedict VIII, which is mostly concerned with defending the monastery from comital and episcopal interference, although he asked the pope to refrain from excommunicating Count Hug of Empúries, 'because he had acted rightly and would continue to do so in the future'.¹⁴⁶ In the process Abbot Pere twice refers to the consecration of a 'new church'. On this basis, recent scholarship has veered towards accepting the present church as substantially complete by 1022, with the western porch rebuilt in the mid-twelfth century, whereas others have uncoupled the document and the archaeology.¹⁴⁷ For most of the twentieth century, scholars

¹⁴⁶ Petrus de Marca, 1998, 1034-35.

¹⁴⁷ Lorés, 2010, 121-31; McNeill, 2013, 5-7; Mataró i Pladelasala, 1999, 236-42 and 536-39.

assigned twelfth-century dates to the main structure or at least to the nave arcades.¹⁴⁸ Scattered documentary references record donations that could have supported a new building in the later tenth and early eleventh centuries: from Count Borrell II of Barcelona-Girona-Osona-Urgell in 993 and another, more clearly linked to construction, in 1003 or 1005.¹⁴⁹ It remains possible, therefore, that the standing building was a subsequent rebuild of the mid-eleventh century, perhaps with funds from the reconciled Count Hug, and that it was again altered in the twelfth century. The columns are integral to the articulation of the nave arcades, which are supported on highly classical piers, all reminiscent of a Roman *scenae frons*, and they may indeed be *spolia* from a Roman theatre at Empúries. The piers are exceptional and today paralleled only at Saint-André-de-Sorède, where their date is also disputed between the early eleventh century and c. 1120.¹⁵⁰

Two types of capital respond to the heights of the available shafts, one an elongated Corinthian form, and the other a cubic capital. Some capitals are badly eroded by water seepage or missing, and others may have been moved in later reconstructions, but it seems likely that the Corinthian forms were intended for the transverse arches and the cubic capitals for all other positions. The capitals sit below substantial impostes that mostly have fine arabesque carving, not unrelated to the border carved around the Saint-André altar table but deeper. The two types of capital also received distinct styles of carving, although they both have studded or cord neckings. The foliate detailing and drilling on the acanthus leaves develops Corinthian forms found in Zaragoza and at Cornellà, but the leaves are more fluid; prominent

fleurons, spiral caulicoles, and curled volutes also reference Zaragozan techniques from the second half of the eleventh century. Deeply undercut carving of plaited interlace decorates the cubic capitals, although some also have a row of acanthus leaves like those of the Corinthian capitals. The depth of the carving and the culmination of the interlace in a fan-like effect sets these capitals apart from the fragments of interlace found at Ripoll and Girona. Indeed, it has more in common with examples found north of the Pyrenees at Saint-André-de-Sorède, in Saint-Pierre at Bessuéjols, and at Sainte-Foy at Conques (Auvergne).¹⁵¹ These comparisons unfortunately raise more questions about dating than they resolve, as Andalusian elements continued to be employed in sculpture north of the Pyrenees, especially in the Auvergne, well into the second half of the twelfth century.¹⁵² Other features from Sant Pere de Rodas can be found on the capitals and friezes at Sant Miquel de Fluvià (Empordà), in particular decorative necking and prominent impostes with vegetal carving, but the quality of the carving is greatly inferior, and this sculptor added human figures. The dating of the sculpture at Sant Miquel is also disputed between the mid-eleventh and twelfth centuries. Ultimately I favour a twelfth-century date for the capitals at Sant Pere and for those at Sant Miquel, and would exclude them from this group of putative early eleventh-century capitals.

In 1019 Oliba conducted a ceremony with Bermon, Viscount of Osona (1015-1030) and his widowed mother, Engundia, to restore the canonry of Sant Vicenç, in memory of his brother, Isouardus.¹⁵³ The defensive site of Cardona (*castrum*) was located above the *strata cardonensis*, a major communication route

148 Gaillard, 1972a, 177; Durliat, 1978, 101-13.

149 Adell Gisbert, 1996-1997, 1424.

150 Lorés, 2010, 122.

151 Lorés, 2010, 123; Vergnolle, 2011, 71-160.

152 Watson, 1989, 65-252.

153 Junyent, 1992, no. 59, 86-89.

Figure 111 Cardona, Sant Vicenç, crypt

between Barcelona, Urgell, and Cerdagne, beside a large salt field.¹⁵⁴ Like Oña (Castile), it drew much of its wealth from the salt. Oliba seems to have had no further involvement with this project, and the church was not consecrated until 1040, by Bishop Eribau of Urgell and in the presence of Bishop Arnulf of Roda de Isàvena and the Count of Osona. In the following year an Abbot Guillem left a donation for illumination and masses at the altar of St. James in the crypt, indicating that at least the crypt, and probably much of the church, was complete by 1040 (fig. 111). The rocky site, almost surrounded by the river Cardoner before it flows into the Llobregat, limited the size of the church and the fortress. Despite these constraints, Sant Vicenç is celebrated for its architectural harmony and rigour, and

has become the epitome of First Southern Romanesque in Catalonia. Although Eric Fernie and Peter Reed have rightly pointed to some changes in the original plan, the sense of the building remains one in which the ground plan seems completely realised in the upper parts of the structure on the interior and exterior (fig. 112).¹⁵⁵ It is a three-aisled basilica with substantial piers and noticeably narrow groin-vaulted side aisles. The original nave vaulting is a matter of dispute, as there is evidence for either a barrel vault on the transverse arches or groin vaults. A dome on squinches covers the crossing, whilst a hall-crypt supports the raised east end and a galilee structure was begun at the west end.¹⁵⁶ The building is now devoid of decoration beyond the niches in the central

¹⁵⁴ Bonnassie, 1975, 833.

¹⁵⁵ Reed, 2000, 24-41; Fernie, 2010, 33.

¹⁵⁶ Fernie, 2010, 33-34.

Figure 112 Cardona, Sant Vicenç, nave

apse and the orders, the receding moulded planes, which articulate the architectural elements. Even the cubic capitals and abaci on the monoliths in the crypt are entirely plain. All the surfaces would doubtless once have been plastered and painted.

The most controversial question concerns the identity of the masons that the counts of Osona could purchase with their salt and other commerce. Some aspects of Cardona can be found locally, especially in less developed forms at Saint-Martin-du-Canigou, albeit on a much smaller scale. Eric Fernie has recently pointed to churches on the Ligurian coast, near Genoa, as potential sources for the aspects that are not found locally. For example, a raised crypt and arched recesses under the eaves of the apse occur at S. Pietro at Agliate near Milan.

S. Paragorio at Noli has traditionally been compared to Cardona for its niches in the apse and compound piers, as well as its raised crypt, but Fernie suggests that S. Fruttuoso di Capodimonte may have more points of comparison, especially because it, like Cardona, was fully vaulted.¹⁵⁷ The Cluniac church at S. Fruttuoso di Capodimonte is undated, so questions of precedence are not entirely clear. The method of contact is not in doubt, as the Genoese were to control much of the salt trade later in the century, so artistic transmission across the Ligurian Sea is entirely plausible.¹⁵⁸ Both Cardona and S. Fruttuoso looked ultimately to Byzantine churches like the Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii, c. 922) in Constantinople. Questions about the formation of the masons who realised the ambitions of churchmen in Catalonia, Italy, and elsewhere, remain at the heart of the debates around these churches. In Catalonia any solution has to explain the dramatic increase in the quantity and quality of building in the first half of the eleventh century. The concomitant increase in wealth, after the collapse of the Caliphate, is part of the explanation, but it is not sufficient to account for the development of expertise. The decision to construct domes on squinches and not on the typical Byzantine pendentives found in the buildings to which Cardona is often compared, suggests that the team of masons may have included men with experience of Andalusí domed spaces.¹⁵⁹ Although the baptistery at Galliano provides a fine example from the early eleventh century, in the peninsula the Great Mosque of Córdoba was the most celebrated example.¹⁶⁰ Perhaps under its influence, a dome on squinches had

¹⁵⁷ Fernie, 2010, 35.

¹⁵⁸ Sprufford, 2000, 159.

¹⁵⁹ Fernie, 2014, 126.

¹⁶⁰ Duran-Porta, 2009, 100; Rossi, 2007, 87-100, and 164-68 for plates.

been used at Sant Miquel de Terrassa, inland from Barcelona, towards the end of the tenth century. The competence displayed in the construction of the dome on squinches, and indeed throughout Cardona, remains problematic. The comparison with Byzantine buildings draws attention to the way in which the precise masonry of Cardona recalls the brickwork that was used to construct the Myrelaion. Brick-building and vaulting were also established techniques of Andalusí masons and were adapted in late-tenth-century Spain and Portugal to emulate Byzantine churches like the Myrelaion. As Fernie notes, the workmanship of the north Italian churches was greatly inferior to that at Cardona.¹⁶¹ A revival of those tenth-century skills some fifty years later does not seem impossible, although much would have depended on where those masons had worked and passed on their solutions in the intervening decades. Another option is the arrival of new masons with an Andalusí formation, who worked with local craftsmen and perhaps with other masons from the North or from Italy, to form a distinctively accomplished team.

Like Cardona, Sant Pere de Casseres (*Castrum Serrae*), is built on a high rocky outcrop over a bend in the gorge of the river Ter, northeast of Vic. The site has a long history of occupation, perhaps because of its hot springs, and was held by the Muslims until Louis the Pious took it in 798 and gave it to the Count of Barcelona. In 1005 Count Ramon Borrell gave it to Ermetruit, Countess of Cardona, so she could refound the monastery dedicated to St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, and St. Andrew. The church was rebuilt during the first half of the eleventh century and consecrated in 1052-1053. From a distance, the chevet would have had a similar effect on the viewer to that at Cardona. The interior could hardly be more different, as its short, wide,

single nave is uninterrupted by piers, and even the apse under its half-dome was articulated only by three windows. Originally it would have relied on a painted programme for its effect. A small marble altar table from Casseres, a reused Roman slab without additional carving, is now preserved in the Museu Episcopal de Vic, together with the stone lipsanotocas that contained many of its relics. Much further to the north, beyond Urgell, another church, Sant Serni de Tavèrnoles, has been connected with Cardona because of its sophisticated plan. This includes a trefoil east end, reminiscent of Sant Pere de Terrassa, and a transept that terminated in semi-circular apses.¹⁶² The latter feature was found in the Myrelaion in Constantinople, in tenth-century Spain at San Cebrián de Mazote in the province of León, and at S. Sepulcro in Milan. Tavèrnoles was probably consecrated between 1035 and 1040 by Arnulf, bishop of Roda de Isàvena, (1023-1067) and by Eribau, bishop of Urgell (1035-1040).¹⁶³ It was also the abbey of Ponç, a monk who travelled across the peninsula to become bishop of Oviedo and Palencia in the second and third decades of the eleventh century.

The Kingdom of Pamplona and its Networks

The death of Ramon Borrell in 1018 changed relations between Barcelona and Pamplona. Even though it would be another twenty years before

¹⁶¹ Fernie, 2010, 36.

¹⁶² Whitehill, 1941, pl.14b, 60; for San Sepulcro, see Schiavi, 2007, 208-13.

¹⁶³ Whitehill, 1941, 58: Whitehill recorded that he and Martorell discovered a large fragment of stucco decoration above the vaulting of the north transept. They thought it was contemporary with the building, but it was probably an addition c. 1100; Mancho, 2007, 167-78.

a marriage alliance was sealed between Sancho III's son, García, and Ermessenda's niece, Estefania de Foix. In the 1020s, communication seems to have been handled mainly through Oliba. Sancho III of Pamplona was ambitious and saw more opportunities for expansion at the expense of his Christian neighbours than were to be had from the taifa kingdoms. Castile and León were no longer strong, and eventually Sancho III found ways to absorb them. In common with Ermessenda of Barcelona, he looked north across the Pyrenees for support, but in his case for social and not military assistance. With hindsight these contacts have been seen as the seed of late eleventh-century Spanish involvement with the great Burgundian reforming abbey of Cluny, and Sancho III, like Oliba, has been reinvented as a Europeaniser.¹⁶⁴ In practice, that aspect of his reign may have been something of a *cul-de-sac*, even if his military encroachments had long-lasting results. Both Raoul Glaber and Ademar of Chabannes place Sancho III c. 1023 in association with the powerful men of the North, the Capetian King Robert II the Pious, Duke William VI of Aquitaine, and Rudolph III of Burgundy. These accounts were written to enhance the prestige of Robert the Pious, in Glaber's case, and of Duke William in Ademar's, and tell us little about Sancho III except that he is a minor participant. In the first account he is amongst those who bring gifts to the king; in the second he is an implicit beneficiary of William's serene rule in Aquitaine under the 'blessed apostle Martial', patron of Ademar's abbey at Limoges.¹⁶⁵ This circle of rulers promoted Benedictine reform, especially at Cluny under Abbot Odilo, and in due course Sancho III became a *socius* and *familiaris*, an associate of the community who was entitled to

intercession in life and above all after death.¹⁶⁶ It may have been through Odilo that Sancho III came to consult Bishop Oliba of Vic regarding the consanguinity of the proposed marriage of his sister, Urraca, to Alfonso V of León in 1023. Oliba argued against the marriage by drawing not only on biblical examples, but also on various canons of sixth-century Visigothic church councils held in Lleida (546), Toledo (527), and Agde (506).¹⁶⁷ Oliba's theological arsenal was firmly grounded in the early church of Hispania as well as Rome. The symbolic, territorial, and diplomatic advantages of the marriage were sufficient to outweigh Oliba's objections, and Sancho III chose to go ahead regardless. Alfonso V had very similar contacts to those of Sancho III, including Duke William VI of Aquitaine, and Cnut of Denmark and England.¹⁶⁸ Despite ignoring his legal advice, Sancho III continued to work with Oliba. Most remarkably, when Urraca went to León, Ponç, monk of Ripoll and abbot of Sant Serni de Tavèrnoles (1000-1022), accompanied her. As Oliba had been Ponç's abbot at Ripoll, this was presumably with his agreement or even at his suggestion, and may have begun as a way of monitoring what he saw as a potentially problematic marriage. The immigrant Ponç and his successful career as bishop of Oviedo, and later Palencia, would have important repercussions.¹⁶⁹ Alfonso V died besieging Viseu (Portugal) in 1028, embroiled in the struggles of the young taifa kingdom of Badajoz against Seville. Urraca became regent for Vermudo III (r. 1028-1037), who was still a minor. Sancho III's designs on Castile were realised in 1029, when the young Count of Castile, García Sánchez, was

164 Mann, 2009, 51; Bango, 2006; Linehan, 1993, 195-98.

165 Ademar of Chabannes, 1897, book 3, chap. 56, 179-82; Landes, 1995, 46-49.

166 Pick, 2013, 3; Henriët, 2000b, 35; Mann, 2009, 51.

167 Isla, 2007, 170; Junyent, 1992, no. 16, 327-32; Mann, 2009, 57-58; Linehan, 1993, 167-68.

168 Beech, 1990, 84.

169 Lomax, 1985, 201-13; Guardia, 2009a, 117-21.

assassinated in León, where he was about to form an alliance by marrying Vermudo's sister, Sancha. Removed from the political arena, he was buried with his father at San Salvador de Oña. Some sources suggested that Sancho III of Pamplona had been behind the plot, and he certainly took full advantage of it. As García Sánchez had no heir, Sancho III claimed Castile for himself through his wife, Mayor, and gave its rule to his second son, Fernando. In 1032 he arranged for Sancha of León to marry Fernando, and thus legitimised his holding of the Tierra de Campos, the lands around Palencia, that formed her dowry. This did not stop him from invading León shortly before his death in 1035, and forcing Vermudo III to retreat into Galicia.

The first mention of the pilgrimage road to Santiago de Compostela is linked to the reign of Sancho III. The record comes from the chronicle known as the *Historia Silense* (*Seminense*), written some 100 years after the event in León. It says that Sancho III seized territory 'from the very peaks of the Pyrenees as far as the fortress of Nájera' and, perhaps a little anachronistically, that 'he made the way (*iter*) of St. James to run without hindrance or deviation'. He could do this because he had seized the land from 'the power of the pagans' and travellers no longer had to take a detour through Álava for fear of barbarians.¹⁷⁰ It is difficult to know whether the '*peregrini*' of the early eleventh century were in the main pilgrims on their way to and from Santiago de Compostela, as they might have been in the early twelfth century when the chronicle was written, or other travellers and traders. Given the paucity of recorded pilgrims in this period, it is reasonable to suggest that the movement of troops and trade were the most important reasons for the promotion of this new route. Above all, this diversion greatly

improved communication across the regions over which Sancho III claimed sway and drew travellers to his capital at Pamplona.¹⁷¹ Sancho III does not seem to have had any interest in building projects during the first two or three decades of his reign. No structures in his territories were to equal the innovative cathedrals and abbeys that were constructed in Catalonia in the second quarter of the eleventh century. On the other hand, a group of monuments that share specific characteristics, ashlar masonry, semi-circular arcades, barrel vaulting, and heavy transverse arches have been associated with the last years of his reign.¹⁷² It is uncertain whether their agency should be linked to the king or if it should be ascribed to reformist Catalan churchmen. The sites involved are San Millán de la Cogolla, the recipient of the ivory processional cross, on the border between Navarre and Castile; San Salvador de Leire in the southeast of Navarre; Palencia Cathedral in southwest Castile; and San Juan de la Peña in Aragón. The distance between them may indicate that Sancho III intended to put his mark on each of the regions that owed him allegiance. The monastic sites selected for attention already had a distinguished anchorite history and were built by rock escarpments.¹⁷³ At San Millán and San Juan de la Peña the interventions were limited to extensions, whereas Palencia Cathedral and Leire were major rebuilding projects that probably continued into the reign of Sancho III's son and heir, García Sánchez, and beyond.

At San Millán, two wider bays were added to the horseshoe central arcade that divides the church (fig. 113).¹⁷⁴ Formed of semi-circular

¹⁷⁰ *Historia Silense*, 1959, ch. 74; for a translation, see Barton, 2000, 41.

¹⁷¹ Moralejo, 1993, 183.

¹⁷² Mann, 2009, 46-74; Martínez de Aguirre, 2009a, 237-50.

¹⁷³ Mann, 2009, 53-56.

¹⁷⁴ Mann, 2009, 52-53; Caballero, 2004b, 13-93.

Figure 113 San Millán de la Cogolla, nave arcade

arches with ashlar voussoirs, they rest on massive imposts and reused columns. At San Juan, another semi-circular arcade forms two western bays, supported on a mixture of piers and a central column. In Palencia only the crypt survives. At Leire, the hall crypt and the triple east end above it have been associated with Sancho III, but the building sequences are complex. These buildings in territory controlled by Sancho III were not that technically assured, but they were stylistically distinct from the tenth-century buildings that they abutted or replaced. The acquisition of Castile and access to León would have greatly increased the wealth of the Navarrese king, but there was still a lack of expertise. A copy of an undated letter from Oliba to Sancho III asks him to make a donation towards the works underway at Ripoll, so one

possibility is that Oliba reciprocated by arranging for some masons to work for the king.¹⁷⁵

Janice Mann explains the visual and structural similarities between San Juan de la Peña and the crypt at Palencia (fig. 114) by linking them both to the peripatetic career of the Catalan, Ponç, and his time as bishop of Oviedo (1025-c. 1033). At Oviedo he would have seen the celebrated vaulted spaces of Santa María de Naranco built by Ramiro I in the mid-ninth century. These may have stood out even more if new building in León, at Alfonso V's church of St. John the Baptist and St. Pelagius, were only of rammed earth (*tapial*) and brick (*ex luto et latere*), as thirteenth-century evidence asserts.¹⁷⁶ In the early 1030s, Ponç was to be found in Sancho III's itinerant court at San Juan de la Peña, at Leire, and at Santa María de Husillos, where he was in charge of re-establishing the See of Palencia.¹⁷⁷ He is the most likely source for masons with the expertise to draw on the structural lessons that were to be seen at Oviedo, especially if these were reinforced by Roman ruins at Palencia. Any masons brought from Catalonia, however, would have been used to building in *petit appareil* and not in the substantial ashlar blocks that are found in this group of buildings. This may explain some of the apparent changes of plan and less successful experiments.

One of the main questions that surround these buildings is the extent to which they embody an interest in reform. There is no doubt that they eschew the horseshoe arches of earlier buildings on the sites. This is especially obvious in the arcade at San Millán de la Cogolla and at San Juan de la Peña. The work at San Millán may have been carried out to mark the

¹⁷⁵ Junyent, 1992, no. 19, 333.

¹⁷⁶ Lucas of Tuy, 2003, 275.

¹⁷⁷ Martínez Díez, 2007, 167, 223; Rubio Sadia, 2010, 243-278.

Figure 114 Palencia Cathedral, crypt of San Antolín

elevation of the relics of St. Aemilian in 1030, when what were believed to be the bones of the saint were lifted from his rocky tomb and placed in a silver chest on the altar. According to the thirteenth-century monk Fernando, who described the event and the ensuing miracles, a new Benedictine rule was introduced at the same time.¹⁷⁸ Such an association between a 'Roman' style of building and the introduction of reform is also proposed at San Juan de la Peña in 1027. Sancho III asked Abbot Odilo of Cluny to send a small group of monks to San Juan de la Peña under an Abbot Paternus.¹⁷⁹ The monks had been living at Cluny but probably came originally from Catalonia or Urgell. Although

much weight has been given to this early Cluniac intervention, it did not necessarily amount to a policy. In common with the rulers in his circle, Sancho III's relations with Cluny were centred on intercession. He donated a quantity of silver to Cluny, probably a share of booty from an attack on Denia and Tortosa and, in return, Abbot Odilo promised to give alms to the poor and build an altar to St. Peter in memory of the king and of Bishop Sancho of Pamplona.¹⁸⁰ The semi-circular arches of the buildings associated with Sancho III may symbolise adherence to the North and to the kind of reform offered by Cluny, but equally the builders may simply have been working in the idiom with which they were already familiar; few outside the taifa kingdoms seem to have been building horseshoe arches at this period. The choice

¹⁷⁸ *Cartulario de San Millán de la Cogolla*, 1976, 193, no.192; Bango, 2007a, 43-44 and 47-48; Gonzalo de Berceo, 1984, 29-49.

¹⁷⁹ Bishko, 1980, 3-4.

¹⁸⁰ Rosenwein, 1989, 195, n.166; Pick, 2013, 3.

of ashlar masonry sets these buildings apart from those in Catalonia, and may be a stronger statement than the shape of the arches. It is difficult to know whether that choice owed more to precedents in Asturias, to Roman ruins, or to contemporary buildings north of the Pyrenees. In any event, the experimental nature of this ashlar construction suggests that the masons were skilled, but not specifically in that method of building. They are more likely, therefore, to have come from Catalonia than from Cluny.

Sancho III may have also emulated his northern peers in an attempt to establish a new cult of San Antolín in the crypt at Palencia. According to Ademar of Chabannes, St. Antolín, the Syrian St. Antoninus, celebrated in the Rouergue, was a popular saint and attracted many pilgrims. Given that author's celebration of the peaceful rule of William of Aquitaine in association with the relics of St. Martial, it would have been logical for King Sancho III to introduce relics of St. Antolín in the same vein. However, Charles Bishko argues that the dedication of the Palencian crypt to St. Antolín dated to the period after the death of Sancho III in 1035, because the cult was popular in León and not in Navarre.¹⁸¹ Vermudo III of León held the lands around Palencia for only a brief period before Sancho III's son, Fernando, defeated him at Tamarón in 1037, but in that time he and his queen, Jimena, issued a charter recognising the restoration of the church and its dedication to the Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and to St. Antolín. Vermudo III's sister and her husband, Fernando I, son of Sancho III, would continue to support the cult in León and in Palencia.¹⁸² This suggests that the Catalan canons in the cathedral were promoting the cult to whichever ruler was on the throne. The foundation legend that surrounds the crypt

survives only in a thirteenth-century version, a time when threats to Palencia's position were recast in poetry.¹⁸³ Even so, it may be significant that the story uses tropes familiar from foundation legends in southern France: the hunter, the hunted animal, the cave, and a vision, to create the story of Sancho III's discovery of a cave at Palencia and his vision of St. Antolín.¹⁸⁴ The 'shrine' of St. Antolín at the east end of the crypt surely belongs to a similar literary genre. Arches of irregular stones form three small horseshoe arches; the central arch rests on an odd arrangement of imposts, capitals, and columns, most likely reused. Above the columns are capitals with the most rudimentary indication of diagonal volutes and imposts; they do not form a pair and are carved with only rough geometric decoration. The whole archaising structure was intended to evoke Visigothic architecture in accordance with later legends, but fails to convince.

This chapter has followed the dramatic changes experienced during the first half of the eleventh century. In the year 1000 the power of al-Andalus was undiminished, but by 1031, the unimaginable, the end of the Caliphate, was widely acknowledged. The territorial map of Spain had been redrawn, and the wealth of the Caliphate had been dispersed across the taifa kingdoms. Catalonia and Castile, previously tributary states, now profited through mercenary payments and booty. Gold, silver, and portable luxury objects transformed the appearance of Catalonia, where aristocratic families were able to enrich numerous ecclesiastical foundations on both sides of the Pyrenees and to encourage trade on a new level. A proportion of the gold and silver was turned

181 Bishko, 1980, 10-14.

182 Mann, 2009, 63-65; Bishko, 1980, 13-17.

183 Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, 1987, book 6.6, 184-85.

184 Remensnyder, 1995, 61-63.

into liturgical furniture, most notably altar frontals made by goldsmiths who could have been local or from northern Italy. Otherwise the northern kingdoms still lacked artistic expertise and continued to rely on the south for most luxury goods. The gold altar frontals were accompanied by marble altar tables and other carvings that required a high level of sculptural expertise. This sudden advent of marble carving recalls the arrival of such sculptors in León in the middle of the tenth century, where they crafted exceptional capitals. Unlike those craftsmen who left no later traces, the sculptors who carved the liturgical pieces in Catalonia seem to have stayed and to have worked over at least two generations. Over the same period, new churches built in the Early Southern Romanesque style began to change the landscape. The source of this architectural expertise remains a matter for debate, but its acquisition was smoothed by

wealth and trade links. Rulers and churchmen forged new networks within and beyond the peninsula, their status enhanced by newly acquired wealth. Most notably, Abbot-bishop Oliba became a member of a group of elite churchmen, corresponding with Gauzlin of Fleury and Odilo of Cluny. An emphasis on relations with the taifa kingdom of Zaragoza to the west gradually replaced the traditional importance of the north-south axis connecting Catalonia and Córdoba. Meanwhile, the northern kingdoms formed links through marriage; Castile tied itself to Pamplona and Catalonia, and Pamplona in turn married into the royal house of León. Catalan churchmen followed these networks, spreading reforming ideals and, perhaps, architectural aspiration. Substantial artistic change would follow political and economic shifts in the second half of the century.

1. c. 1009-c.1030
2. c. 1030-c.1065
3. c. 1065-c.1079

- 1 C. 1009-C.1030
- 2 C. 1030-C.1065
- 3 C. 1065-C.1079

7 Trading Peace, Gold and Expertise, c. 1050-c. 1075

Taifa Kingdoms

Throughout the mid-eleventh century the Muslim taifa kingdoms remained the source of gold, silver, ivory, and silk, the defining materials of status, which increasingly adorned the buildings and bodies of the Christian rulers in the peninsula.¹ Meanwhile the taifa rulers fostered a culture of music, mathematics, and poetry, which expressed a longing for the glories of Córdoba.² These 'Party Kings' were closely associated through marriage and trade, and they surrounded themselves with a group of organized Malikī scholars. As all derived their legitimacy from Córdoba, there was a detectable taifa identity in the art and architecture of their cities, but each kingdom developed a slightly different artistic approach in dialogue with other Islamic rulers around the Mediterranean and in a spirit of rivalry with other taifas. Aside from a few dated pieces and buildings, the works can be assigned only broad dates, mostly around the middle of the eleventh century.³ Remnants of taifa palaces survive, from the restored but spectacular Aljafería in Zaragoza and the Alcazaba in Málaga, to the ruins of Albarracín, Almería, and Balaguer. Al-Mu'tamid's palace in Seville is entirely lost. Marble and alabaster capitals in sharp relief decorated mosques, palaces and baths. Elaborate painted stuccowork covered surfaces in the palace at Balaguer (Lleida) with geometric and foliate ornament. Only fragments

of al-Mam'un's Toledan palace remain, once ornamented with stuccowork and coloured glass, creating glittering images of falconry and lions.⁴ Even less remains from the taifa kingdom of Badajoz, which stretched from Mérida to Lisbon. A collection of ceramics from Mértola shows trade with Tunis or Qayrawan (Kairouan), and a plaque with Kufic script commemorates the building of a minaret for a mosque at Moura (Portugal) in 1052.⁵ Further south, the Zīrid dynasty occupied Granada, where some baths were built at the foot of the Albaicín (fig. 115). The horseshoe arcades incorporate *spolia* from both the Roman and Caliphal periods, perhaps in an attempt to claim the legitimizing legacy of both. Unlike most taifa capitals, Granada was not a major Roman site, so the Zīrids had to import pieces in order to perpetuate the Umayyad love of the classical. The luxury goods produced in these taifa kingdoms, especially textiles, were traded with their northern neighbours (fig. 116). A small piece of information from Ourense gives a rare glimpse of this trade and of the activities of Jewish merchants in Galicia in 1044. Some Jewish merchants were with the nobleman Menendo González when they were attacked by Arias Oduáriz; Menendo had to send troops to recover the silks and other goods they had been carrying.⁶

Maps of the kingdoms, both Christian and Muslim, show a patchwork at this period, a very different picture from the expanse of al-Andalus and the small Christian kingdoms of the tenth century. This rough equalization

1 For the gold route from Sijilmasa, see Miller, 2009, 73-84.

2 Robinson, 1998, 20-31; Calvo, 2011a, 69-92; Fierro, 1994.

3 Robinson, 1992, 49-61; Rosser-Owen, 2010, 31-33.

4 Calvo, 2002, 31-73; Calvo, 2011a, 77-81 and 91-92.

5 Torres, 2001, 112, 119-22.

6 Antonio Rubio, 291; Andrade, 1995, 504-505.

Figure 115 Granada, Zirid baths

gives a fair impression of the way that they interacted. No one kingdom had any hope of gaining sway over all the rest, so they existed through negotiation and in shifting alliances. The military power of the taifa kingdoms was often weak, and they lived under constant threat of attack from one another and from the Christians. Religious adherence did not determine the lines of engagement or trade routes, which both operated across faiths. Labour was traded across notional dividing lines, most notably by mercenaries who strengthened the taifa armies. From the late 1040s a new variation on this trade emerged. It is documented in Barcelona and in the Pyrenean county of Urgell, but was probably underway around the same time in Navarre. The proponents called it '*paria*' and used it to denote a transaction in which a taifa kingdom paid one or more of the Christian

kingdoms not to attack them; it was, as Angus MacKay says, a kind of protection racket.⁷ The payments were intended to be regular, usually annual, and thus potentially provided a stable income. They were delivered mainly in gold and silver, but sometimes luxury goods, and even artistic expertise, may have been handed over *in lieu* of coinage. As Julie Harris has shown, the Church justified the practice through biblical precedent, through the idea of Egyptian gold, (Ex.12.35), where God allowed the children of Israel 'to spoil the Egyptians' of their gold, silver, and raiments. It is impossible to isolate the origin of the *paria*, because the sources are fragmentary, but the practice is unlikely to have emerged fully formed. It probably began its existence entwined with other kinds of payment, particularly fees to mercenaries. Although the documentary evidence relates to Barcelona, Urgell, and Pamplona, some scholars would place León and Castile at the head of that list, because Fernando I protected al-Mam'un of Toledo from attack by Sulayman of Zaragoza in 1043. Fernando received payment for his support, but it is uncertain whether it was an early *paria* payment or a mercenary fee.⁸ This shows how difficult it is to categorise some of these relationships, and they were probably not much clearer to the participants who had to balance several roles. Whatever they were, these arrangements were not *reconquista*.

The County of Barcelona

Paria payments were crucial to the success of Ramon Berenguer I of Barcelona (r. 1023-1076). He had begun his rule as a minor and only gradually gained control of his county with the support, and sometimes opposition,

⁷ MacKay, 1977, 17.

⁸ Lacarra, 1965, 255-77; Blanco Lozano, 1987, 169-72.

Figure 116 Taifa textile (Museo Arqueológico de Huesca)

of his formidable grandmother, Ermessenda. From that position he created a long narrow corridor, from south of Barcelona almost as far west as Barbastro, deep into Aragonese and taifa territory.⁹ His two brothers eventually surrendered their inherited lands to him, as he was the stronger military leader, and alliances, or mercenary arrangements, were made with Ermengol III, count of Urgell, and with Arnau Mir de Tost. With these forces, Ramon Berenguer I put pressure on the taifa kingdoms of Lleida and Balaguer, and claimed the castle of Camarasa, strategically built at the confluence of the Segre and Noguera-Pallaresa rivers.¹⁰ Arnau Mir de Tost, who may have been the most talented soldier of the three, took the nearby

castle of Àger. They shared out the resulting *paria* payments.¹¹ In 1048 Ramon Berenguer and his first wife, Elisabet, gave a twentieth of the payment that they received from Zaragoza to the church of Sant Pere at Vic; this probably represented a quarter of the *quinto* (20%), the portion of spoils due to religious institutions in accordance with both Christian and Muslim tradition.¹² The larger share of the *paria* payments were used to repair captured castles, to ransom prisoners, and for the purchase of additional territory. In 1057 Ramon Berenguer I bought the rights over Girona from Ermessenda and, in the following year, those of Carcassonne, the county north of the Pyrenees that had belonged to Ermessenda's father.

9 Bishko, 1980, 63.

10 Fité Llevot, 2010, 163-66.

11 Lacarra, 1965, 259.

12 O'Callaghan, 2003, 166; Bofarull y Mascaró, 1836, 14.

In 1052 Ramon took a second wife, Almodis of the Marche, countess of Toulouse. This highly controversial marriage entailed both parties repudiating their previous spouses, excommunication, and a legacy of colourful stories that included Ramon sending a fleet of taifa ships to seize Almodis.¹³ Despite this, the marriage survived and brought increased stability to Barcelona, and Almodis even proved herself a match for Ermessenda.¹⁴ Together with his new wife, Ramon Berenguer I turned his attention to repairing the cathedral of Barcelona and, in 1058, the cathedral was re-dedicated in their presence.¹⁵ Finally defeated by her grandson and his new wife, Ermessenda, then aged about 80, made her will. The picture created by the list of donations is one of continuity, restoration, and the completion of projects started in the first half of the century. Ermessenda's will provides a map of her ecclesiastical interests, as it stipulates the exact monetary amounts of each bequest and lists the recipients who would provide the most effective intercession for her soul.¹⁶ The first gift was 30 ounces of gold to the canons at the cathedral of Girona, where Ermessenda was to be buried.¹⁷ Ermessenda had already donated a house to the canons at Girona, which was to become their dormitory, the only building work mentioned in her will. The monastery of Sant Feliu de Guíxols received 70 *mancusos* of silver on condition that the monks used it to commission a silver altar frontal. The will does not stipulate where the monks were to find their goldsmith; this

was presumably obvious to the recipients. The monastery of Sant Miquel de Fluvià (Alt Empordà) was to have 30 *mancusos* without any instructions. Bishop Oliba had initiated a building project on that site, and just before his death in 1045 he marked out the church with the help of the archbishop of Narbonne.¹⁸ It was not consecrated until 1066, so Ermessenda's donation may have enabled its completion. This campaign resulted in a classic Early Southern Romanesque church with three aisles, a triple east end, projecting transepts, and a combination of quadrant and ribbed barrel vaults. Before a later refurbishment, it was decorated on the exterior with pilasters and a corbel table, like so many other churches in the area. North of the Pyrenees, Ermessenda gave similar donations to Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa, to Sainte-Marie in Arles-sur-Tech, to Saint-Paul in Narbonne, and to the canons of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse. The cathedral of Elne received 50 *mancusos*, where local nobles commissioned a carved marble altar table, similar to that at Saint-André-de-Sorède. The marble slab still survives, although the repoussé altar frontal was melted down in the eighteenth century.¹⁹ According to an inscription, it was made in honour of the Saviour and the martyr St. Eulalia in 1069. In Italy, the will promised 100 *mancusos* to the canons of St. Peter's in Rome, 200 for glass windows, and another 100 for the absolution of her soul. Another 30 *mancusos* went to St. Michael of Monte Gargano, presumably in the hope of securing the services of the psychopomp archangel. On her deathbed in 1058, Ermessenda added a brief codicil, where she gave her mules to the clerics and women who were attending her, and to the pope her wooden bowls decorated with gold. Her rock crystal chessmen were to go to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard (Nîmes) to pay for

13 Kagay, 1993, 37-47.

14 Sobrequés, 1961, 16-26.

15 Petrus de Marca, 1998, cols. 1113-16; Sobrequés, 1961, 7-10.

16 Pladevell i Font, 2000, 20-21; Gil i Roman, 2004, doc. 187, 530-31, doc. 188, 532-33; Zimmermann, 2003, 807-810.

17 Español, 1996, 73-74.

18 Petrus de Marca, cols. 1087-88.

19 Deschamps, 1925, 153-54; Deschamps, 1929, xiii.

an altar frontal. The church of Sant Quirze de Besora, high in the valley of the Ter on the road to Ripoll, was next to the castle where Ermessenda died, and she left enough silver and gold for the clergy to commission 'the finest cross'. She sent her best breviary to the cathedral of Girona, together with the silver bowls that were with her and those in Vic. The wife of the count of Narbonne was to have two silver cups, a fur, and all the wheat and wine that Ermessenda had in Girona. These are the deathbed gifts of one of the most powerful women of the peninsula in the eleventh century.

Navarre and Barcelona

In accordance with the norms of partible inheritance, when Sancho III of Pamplona died in 1035, each son was bequeathed part of his vast kingdom. García Sánchez, the eldest, received Pamplona and the rest of Navarre; Fernando kept Castile; and the illegitimate son, Ramón, was given the frontier lands of Aragón. At the time of his father's death the eldest son, García, was travelling, on his way back from a pilgrimage to Rome, so it was the second son, Fernando, who chose to bury his father 'with great honour' in the Castilian monastery of Oña.²⁰ These sons were not content with their given portions, and the associated political links with taifa kingdoms, so the first twenty years of the new order was spent in brotherly strife. This culminated in September 1054 with Fernando's defeat of his elder brother at Atapuerca. At that point the art historical narrative usually jumps to the last years of Fernando I's reign, since that period appears to offer such a rich collection of surviving objects. It was García Sánchez (r. 1035-1054), however, who entered into relations with Barcelona, extracted *paria* payments from

Zaragoza, and instigated a period of artistic exploration. In 1037 García helped his brother Fernando to defeat Vermudo III of León and thus set him on the road to becoming king of León as well as count of Castile. The next year García journeyed to Barcelona, alongside the river Aragón, via Termes and San Juan de la Peña, to meet with Ermessenda of Barcelona, who had arranged for him to marry her niece, Estefania de Foix.²¹ In 1045, García Sánchez conquered Calahorra, and used that advantage to exact payment from Zaragoza for the protection of its territory from his army and from the Aragonese.²² The original transaction may have been somewhere between a mercenary payment and a true *paria*, but García used the word *paria* when he referred to it.²³

García's conquest also prompted a letter from Abbot Odilo of Cluny. Odilo reminded him of the friendship that had existed between Cluny and his father, Sancho III, and asked for help. Although a promoter of reform, García was never a great supporter of Cluny, and the letter had no recorded result. Instead of a large gift to Cluny, García used a tenth part of the booty gained from the conquest of Calahorra and the *paria* tribute paid by the new ruler of Zaragoza, al-Muqtadir, to fund his own church, Santa María at Nájera. The new foundation followed the tradition of victory monuments, familiar from ninth-century Asturias and, like Ramiro I's church on Monte Naranco, it was dedicated to the Virgin. Like San Juan de la Peña, it was built against a rock with a cave, which prompted a foundation legend mimicking that of the Aragonese monastery. The story told how García discovered a hidden statue of the Virgin in a cave, when out hunting.²⁴ By deciding to set

21 Canellas, 1979, 141-42; Martín Duque, 2005, 30.

22 Olcoz, 2009, 227-250; Carl, 2011, 23.

23 Bishko, 1980, 42-44.

24 Cantera, 2005, 39-72.

20 *Historia Silense*, 1959, 180, para. 76; Isla, 2007, 165-68.

up a major new foundation in Nájera on the site of the cave, García was promoting the Roman road revived by his father, known as '*strata de francos*'.²⁵ Nájera was a natural stopping point after Pamplona and before Burgos on this route, which already emphasised the importance of those coming from the north; García also planned accommodation for such travellers. A legend says that García tried to take the relics of St. Aemilan from the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla in 1053 to his new foundation in Nájera. A group of bishops moved the body of the saint from the church of Suso at the top of the mountain, but when the relics reached the base of the mountain the saint would not move any further, neither forwards nor back.²⁶ So the king and bishops decided to build a new church on the plain by the river Cárdenas, on a site known as Yuso.²⁷ The new position made San Millán de la Cogolla much more accessible, and perhaps a more attractive diversion from the main road. Although the funds for the initial building campaign probably came from earlier *paria* payments, Yuso was not consecrated until 1067, long after the death of García. Nothing is known of its appearance, as it was razed in order to build a baroque church in the seventeenth century.

Part of the abbey church of San Salvador in Leire is sometimes also attributed to King García, and a document of Sancho IV el Peñalen, dated to 1057, says that García Sánchez had hoped to see this church completed.²⁸ The charter is suspect for technical reasons, but the sentiment may well be genuine, as there is no obvious reason for fabricating it. The day

chosen for the 1057 consecration fell close to the October feast of the virgin martyrs, Nunilo and Alodia, patron saints of Leire.²⁹ This raises the question of their reliquary. In later centuries the relics of the saints were kept in the ivory casket of 'Abd al-Malik (1003-1004), but there is no record of its arrival at Leire.³⁰ The casket could have arrived around the time of the consecration, perhaps as part of the *vetus paria* from Zaragoza, or it might have been acquired only after the conquest of Huesca (1096) when a second consecration took place at Leire, or even later. Whatever is the case, the reliquary may have been displayed in the cyclopean crypt at Leire (fig. 117). Substantial blocks of ashlar masonry, huge capitals, and short columns define this space, whilst heavy barrel vaulting is supported by a central arcade that divides the nave, and on each side by massive cruciform piers.³¹ Some of the capitals have rudimentary decoration that uses simple parallel lines to delineate diagonal volutes. Two engaged columns frame the triple-apsed east end; the one to the left has a plain abacus and a drum-shaped capital, but on the right the arch meets the column without any attempt to carve the upper block into a capital. Excavations have shown that a deeper crypt may have been planned originally, but the columns were buried when the masons decided on a different way to solve the relationship between the crypt and the upper structure. Arguments in favour of a c. 1057 date for the crypt, and for the east end of the church above, are partly based on similarities with Catalan buildings, in particular the plan of Santa Maria in the castle at Besalú.³² Comparisons with other

25 Vázquez de Parga, 1949, 155-156.

26 Gonzalo de Berceo, 1984, 28-32; Reglero de la Fuente, 2009, 33-37.

27 Bango, 2007, 53-54; García de Cortazar, 1969, 151-52, and 166-67.

28 Mann, 2009, 71.

29 Harris, 1995, 215 and 220, n.19.

30 Harris, 1995, 213-21.

31 Martínez de Aguirre, 2004, 61-70; Martínez de Aguirre, 2009a, 237-50.

32 Fernie, 2014, 142; Sagrera, 2006, 105-49.

Figure 117 San Salvador de Leire (Navarre), crypt

buildings attributed to the reigns of Sancho III and García Sánchez, notably the crypt at Palencia, may support this date. The crypt under Palencia Cathedral has barrel vaulting and transverse arches that almost reach the floor to enclose its four bays, features that it shares with the crypt at Leire. Janice Mann has highlighted the career of Bishop Ponç in the 1030s and possible links between Palencia and the vaulting of the belvedere on Monte Naranco as an explanation for the advanced barrel vaulting on both sites.³³ Much of the masonry at Palencia may be reused from Roman structures, as the cathedral occupies a site immediately opposite a bridge over the

river Carrión, where the Roman administrative buildings were probably once located; the possibility of reused stones from a Roman vault could help to support the earlier dating (fig. 114). Against this, the regular stonework of the barrel vaulting at Leire and Palencia would normally suggest a late eleventh-century date, which would accord with the second recorded consecration date of Leire in 1098. Moreover, the east end of the crypt at Palencia is semi-circular and articulated by blind arcading, characteristics that connect it to the late-eleventh-century upper church at San Juan de la Peña. Ultimately, the crypt at Leire remains unique and enigmatic, either precocious or archaic. Excavations conducted by Iñiguez in the 1960s identified the foundations of a small church below the nave of the standing church at Leire, with a triple east end and a two-bay nave.³⁴ The similarity between the plan of the earlier church and that of the crypt suggests that the masons of the latter may have been deliberately quoting the earlier structure, an approach that may also have been used at Santiago de Compostela in the late 1070s.

In 1054 García's prosperous and pious reign was about to be undone by a sibling battle for territory, centred on the borderlands between Castile and Navarre. Abbot Iñigo of Oña and Abbot Domingo of Silos both tried to avert the crisis without success. García was defeated by his brother, Fernando, and died on the battlefield of Atapuerca. The victor held back from seizing Navarre, claiming only the area around Oña, where he had buried his father's body and enshrined the legitimacy of the dynasty. He allowed the rest of the territory to pass as a tributary kingdom to García's son, Sancho Garcés IV, later known as 'el Peñalen'.³⁵ It was in the presence of the young King Sancho IV,

33 Mann, 2009, 61-64.

34 Iñiguez, 1966, 189-220.

35 Reilly, 1988, 8.

Fernando I of León and Castile, and Ramiro of Aragón, that the church at Nájera was consecrated on 29 June 1056 by the buccaneering Guifred de Cerdagne, archbishop of Narbonne and nephew of Bishop Oliba of Vic, and by Bishop Gómez of Burgos and Bishop Gómez of Nájera, all presumably in sight of the tomb of King García.³⁶ Queen Estefanía inherited the responsibility for the building works at Nájera, and in her will of 1060 she endowed it with her estate at Cañas and other properties.³⁷ She also provided for those who had lost their lands after Atapuerca. An illuminated confirmation of the foundation charter survives, written in Visigothic script (*Privilegio de Nájera*, Real Academia de la Historia), most recently studied by Francisco Prado-Vilar.³⁸ The text confirms that the extended royal family had attended the foundation ceremony of 1052, and that Ramón Berenguer I of Barcelona had been present.³⁹ The local bishops of Nájera, Pamplona, and Álava, with the abbots of the most important monasteries of the region, Oña, Irache, and San Millán de la Cogolla, had presided over and witnessed the event. The church had been given a generous selection of relics including some that García had collected on his 1035 visit to Rome.⁴⁰ There has been some disagreement as to whether this is the original charter or a twelfth-century copy, although even those who opt for the latter consider it a close copy of an original.⁴¹ The illuminated border of the charter shows the dedicatee, the Virgin, and, opposite her, the Archangel Gabriel. Along the lower frame the figures of King García and his queen,

Estefanía, stand either side of a representation of the church.⁴² The building is depicted in section to show a high central nave, supported on two tiers of slender columns with small capitals, and flanked by two lower side aisles under sloping roofs. The most noticeable feature in this image is the pronounced horseshoe shape of the arches in the upper nave and side aisles, which recalls the depiction of churches in the *Facundus Beatus* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Vitrina 14-2), commissioned before 1047 by Fernando I and Sancha in León.⁴³ The overall style of the charter's illumination is not that of the *Facundus Beatus*, but instead uses a more naturalistic approach, sometimes seen as proto-Romanesque. This artistic vocabulary, where the drapery moulds and enhances the bodies, has been linked to developments north of the Pyrenees, in a region around Limoges that stretched from Gascony to Poitou. This suggests that García had links with scriptoria where the new style was being developed.

One transpyrenean scriptorium was to produce a *Beatus* manuscript for Gregory Muntaner, abbot of the monastery of Saint-Sever-sur-l'Ardour in Gascony from 1028 to 1072. The only named scribe or illuminator is a Stephanus Garsia, perhaps the chief designer of the book, whose name indicates that he was of local origin.⁴⁴ However, the Saint-Sever *Beatus* does not include any horseshoe arches. As the illuminator of the charter did not employ any other Iberian conventions, the decision to depict horseshoe arches on the charter could imply that García's church at Nájera had a horseshoe arcade, like those of tenth-century Mozarabic churches. It is even possible that Santa María de Nájera was not an entirely new building. Another portion of

36 Cantera, 1991, doc. 10.

37 Cantera, 1991, doc. 13, 19; Carl, 2011, 20-21.

38 Prado-Vilar, 2009, 205-206 and n. 54, 219-220; Galván, 2006, 287-90; Silva y Verástegui, 2005, 362-65.

39 Silva y Verástegui, 2005, 362-65.

40 Cantera, 2005, 49.

41 Galván, 2006, 287-290.

42 Prado Vilar, 2009, 205-206.

43 Williams, 1998, no.11, 34.

44 Williams, 1998, 44-57.

King García's *paria* payments also funded an altar frontal for Nájera, which survived into the eighteenth century, as both de Sandoval and Yepes saw it.⁴⁵ Their descriptions say that it was made of hammered gold sheets, with many sizeable sculpted statues, fourteen large precious stones, twenty-four very large pearls, and twenty-three large enamels. An inscription said that 'the most pious king Garsia made this', which may refer to the church or the original commission of the altar frontal, which goes on to say that 'I', presumably the altar frontal, was 'made for [Queen] Estefania', and that the ornament is by the revered Almanius'.⁴⁶ Evidence for the patronage of sumptuary art in the north of the peninsula is extremely rare, outside the county of Barcelona, before San Isidoro in León became a treasure house of gold and ivory. The Christian kingdoms did not produce their own luxury goods, but seem to have acquired fine liturgical objects and textiles in this period by trading *paria* gold.⁴⁷ Given his name, the craftsman Almanius who inspired such admiration probably came from Germany, and similar combinations of decorative features could be found around Trier or Regensburg in the early eleventh century.⁴⁸ Almanius could have come directly from Germany, or via northern Italy, where artists trained in the techniques fostered by the Ottonian and Salian emperors produced related work at this period. This altar frontal embodied political and artistic links and represented highly visible support for Queen Estefania very soon after the death of García at Atapuerca. The question is who came to her aid and helped her to commission such a spectacular altar frontal? The most likely

protector is Barcelona, using its contacts in Italy, as Ramon Berenguer I had attended the consecration of Nájera and had the clearest strategic interest in an on-going alliance with Navarre. The gold altar frontal might have been seen as an emulation of the Girona altar frontal funded over twenty years earlier by her aunt, Ermessenda, countess of Barcelona, a similar use for wealth gained from complex relations with the Muslims. Barcelona's links with Conques and its environs provide another possible route for the arrival of Almanius, as the abbey of Sainte-Foy may have had access to the necessary expertise. A third option is Abbot Hugh of Cluny. Although there is no record of García as even a *familiaris* of Cluny, it is possible that Hugh saw the weak position of Estefania as an opportunity for renewing Cluny's association with the Pamplonan monarchy. He was later to come to the aid of Fernando I's daughter, Urraca, in another crisis. Hugh had clear access to this kind of German workmanship, but the lack of enameling on metalwork commissioned by Fernando I after he became a *socius* of Cluny, together with no Cluniac presence at the consecration of Nájera, makes this option less likely.

Castile and León Enshrined at San Isidoro

At some point after 1055, Fernando I managed to divert much of the *vetus paria* of Zaragoza towards León by attacking the lands of al-Muqtadir.⁴⁹ He had continued to have dealings with Toledo, as Pascual, the Mozarabic bishop of Toledo, was consecrated in León in the same year.⁵⁰ By 1062 he was also extracting payments from Toledo, after raiding the lands around Alcalá de Henares, and by 1063 Seville was also

45 Martínez de Aguirre, 2005, 367-68.

46 Canellas, 1979, 151.

47 Lacarra, 1965, 257.

48 Lasko, 1972, 110-140; AMS, 1993, cat. no. 119; Maggioni, 2007, 269-87.

49 Lacarra, 1965, 257.

50 Reilly, 1988, 11-12.

paying *paria* payments. Fernando had raided across much of modern-day Portugal, and made territorial gains at the expense of the taifa of Badajoz. He took captives when he besieged Lamego in 1057, and the early twelfth-century chronicle, the *Historia Silense* (*Seminense*), provides valuable evidence for the way Fernando I used the people that he acquired: 'Some of the Moors of Lamego were put to the sword, others were put in iron chains so they could do a variety of work on churches'.⁵¹ It is difficult to interpret this passage. Chains were the mark of the captured prisoner and, for Christians, became the usual votive gift after release. The Lamegan men may have formed chain gangs for hard labour, as translations of this passage often imply, or they have been skilled craftsmen who were chained because they were a valuable resource.

After 1060, when the king was aging and worn down by years of such military activity, Fernando I and Queen Sancha turned their attention to their legacy. The traditional picture sees these last few years of the king's reign as an explosion of acquisition and consumption, and the beginning of a special intercessory relationship with the abbey of Cluny. According to this premise, the regular payments from Zaragoza enabled Fernando I to establish a relationship with Cluny and to obtain the *socius* status enjoyed by his father, Sancho III.⁵² In return for an annual payment of 1000 gold dinars to Cluny for the clothing of the monks, he received intercession on a level previously enacted only for the Germanic emperors.⁵³ This view makes Fernando I the lead figure in a series of transactions between León and Cluny that would colour dealings between the peninsula and transpyrenean ecclesiastics into the

twelfth century. The essential components of this mutually beneficial relationship were as follows. The taifa kingdoms had considerable wealth and expertise; the Christian kings lacked status in the European arena; and the Hispanic church was tainted with heresy by the Arian Visigoths and the proximity of the Muslims. As the Leonese kings began to extract wealth from their Muslim neighbours, they spent a portion of it to align themselves with the Ottonian emperors by purchasing the most recognised and theatrical intercession available. Lucy Pick has recently questioned the nature and chronology of this arrangement.⁵⁴ She places the formal relationship between León and Cluny in the years after the exile of Fernando's son, Alfonso VI, and after the assistance he received from Cluny at the behest of his sister, the infanta Urraca. Other scholars, including Patrick Henriët, regard the lack of firm documentary evidence for Fernando's gift to Cluny as unproblematic, since it did not constitute an official transaction.⁵⁵ Fernando certainly supported religious reform, especially amongst secular clergy, and had this codified at the councils of Coyanza (1055) and Compostela (1056); bishops from Portugal and from Navarre, Pamplona, and Calahorra attended in 1055, along with the Catalan Miro, bishop of Palencia.⁵⁶ Given Fernando I's immense wealth and Cluny's propensity to ask for assistance, he probably did make a gift to the abbey before his death, but the fixed annual nature of the agreement was probably enhanced, or added, after Alfonso VI reclaimed the *paria* payments in 1074. What does this mean for the art and architecture usually attributed to the last years of Fernando and Sancha's rule?

51 Barton, 2000, 48-49; see also, Harris, 1997, 161.

52 Bishko, 1980, 2-136.

53 Bishko, 1984, 47-59; Bishko, 1980, 23-24.

54 Pick, 2013, 1-17.

55 Henriët, 2007, 101-24.

56 Bishko, 1980, 26-27.

The manuscripts commissioned by Fernando and Sancha provide some stylistic and chronological benchmarks. The *Facundus Beatus*, produced in 1047 before the death of García and the procurement of the *vetus paria*, was illuminated in a traditional Leonese manner with some evidence of contact with a Castilian scriptorium, or a Castilian model, perhaps from Valeránica. This blend may have intentionally referred to Fernando I's dual rulership over the venerable kingdom of León and its lesser neighbour the county of Castile. By placing his figures on the ground and moulding some of the bodies, the illuminator also showed some awareness of newer approaches. In 1055, the year after Atapuerca, Sancha commissioned a prayerbook, a *Liber diurnus*, for Fernando (Santiago de Compostela, Biblioteca de la Universidad Ms 609, Res.1), executed for the monarchs by a scribe called Petrus and an illuminator named Fructuosus.⁵⁷ Both John Williams and Francisco Prado-Vilar have compared the illumination of this prayer book to the charter of Nájera, identifying it as both a clear break with Leonese tradition and, in its use of gold and purple, as an embodiment of imperial pretensions. Fernando and Sancha now had access to illuminators who were working in the new style. The text of this manuscript, and that of a second prayerbook ordered by Sancha for her own use in 1059, shows the monarchs' interest in reform, whilst affirming their fundamental devotion to the Old Hispanic liturgy.⁵⁸ The style and composition of the illumination likewise look in both directions, to Hispanic tradition and to new models from north of the Pyrenees. Iconographically the illumination looks to Ottonian Germany – and the depiction of Fernando I is uncannily close to the portrayal

of Emperor Henry III – but precedents for the style can be found nearer the Pyrenees around Limoges.

The Leonese monarchs' attitude to architecture is harder to assess. Some scholars, notably Bredekamp and Seehausen, have argued that Fernando used architecture to legitimise his rule and support his imperial aspirations.⁵⁹ Like García and Estefanía, Fernando and Sancha focused on one church, in their case on the old church of SS. John the Baptist and Pelayo, which was to be reconsecrated in the mid-twelfth century as the church of St. Isidoro. The chronology and archaeology of this building has generated much scholarly debate. Earlier structures on the site may have included an original Roman or late antique building, and perhaps a church from the time of Alfonso V. The standing church was built in the twelfth century, except for the galilee-narthex, known as the Pantheon, which is attributed to the infanta Urraca in the last two decades of the eleventh century. A church built by Fernando and Sancha is posited between the early phases and the later eleventh century interventions, but the archaeological and documentary evidence is highly problematic, as much of the written evidence comes from the thirteenth century.⁶⁰ One inscription talks of the recent rebuilding of the basilica (*aula*) by Fernando and Sancha, and of its completion by Sancha (d. 1067), asserting that the couple replaced the mud-brick (*lutea*) structure with one of stone (*lapidea*).⁶¹ This may be only a literary topos, as the language is biblical, specifically referencing Exodus 1.15, where the Israelites, enslaved by the Egyptians, were obliged to make mud bricks. The narrative of Exodus had long been

⁵⁷ AMS, 1993, cat. no. 144, 290-91; Prado-Vilar, 2009, 202-209.

⁵⁸ Pick, 2011, 27-54; Klinka, 2012.

⁵⁹ Bredekamp, 2011, 156-59; Seehausen, 2009a, 204.

⁶⁰ Williams, 2011b, 93-116; Sánchez Ameijeiras, 2005, 479-520; Utrero, 2014, 1-53.

⁶¹ Martin, 2006, 46.

a powerful metaphor for the Christians of the peninsula, as it always was for the Jews, and references to it were promoted by Alfonso VI and his sister, Urraca. Sancha's direct involvement is also supported by the twelfth-century *Historia Silense* (*Seminense*), which describes how she worked hard to convince Fernando I to move his place of burial to León, so they could both lie with her father and brother in the ancestral cemetery. Using classical allusions, the text also says that 'she persuaded him to commission a church as the sepulchre of the kings, where their bodies could be buried *rightly and splendidly*'.⁶² It adds that, having agreed, Fernando allotted stonemasons to the work. Both these statements have usually been taken to mean that the king ordered a new church to be built and assigned masons for the project. However, it is equally possible, as there is no mention of a new building, that the main structure was already standing and required only alterations for its expanded funerary function. John Williams has led attempts to evaluate these statements against the archaeological record and undertook a survey with Helmut Schlunk in the early 1970s.⁶³ A three-aisled structure of modest size had been exposed earlier by Juan Crisóstomo Torbado, below the floor in the northwest corner of the present church, together with ashlar stone foundations and entrances on the west and north sides. These remains have been interpreted as the church of Fernando I and Sancha, but it remains unclear whether they constituted a new church or reuse of a previous structure.⁶⁴ The need for speed this late in Fernando's life favours the latter idea.

Like his brother before him, Fernando I needed to acquire relics, and he did not have time to go on pilgrimage to Rome. First the royal couple set about retrieving relics that had been spread around the kingdom in less secure times. According to a lost inscription in 1059, they commissioned a casket for the relics of St. John the Baptist, and for those of St. Pelagius brought from Córdoba in the tenth century and now reclaimed from Oviedo.⁶⁵ The wooden core of this house shrine, once mostly covered in gold, was stripped by Napoleon's soldiers, and now has only vestiges of gold filigree, gilt nails, and some incised lines that marked out an arcaded design along the sides (fig. 118). Despite this plunder, twenty-five plaques of ivory survived, as they had no monetary value. Twelve rectangular plaques on the sides depict the twelve apostles under arches. On the top of the lid a Lamb of God is surrounded by the four Evangelist symbols, whilst a cherubim, a seraphim, and angels extend the celestial sphere down the sloping sides; they share this surface with four classicizing male personifications of the Rivers of Paradise and the Archangel Michael killing the dragon. Although in shape and broad conception the casket looks towards Byzantine antecedents, and to German reliquaries inspired by them, it combined gold and ivory in a new way. Its iconography and compartmentalised design, especially when viewed from above, recall full-page Ottonian miniatures, for example, from the Uta Codex, whilst more locally the lid may reference the Astorga Casket.⁶⁶ The style of the ivories has been connected with Echternach, even though it has been admitted that the stylistic parallels are not sufficient to justify attributing the León casket to any

62 Author's translation; Martin, 2006, 38-40; *Historia Silense*, 1959, 197-98.

63 Williams, 1973, 170-184; Williams, 2011b, 93-116.

64 Boto, 2009, 151-91.

65 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 109, 236-238; Viñayo, 1972, 103-104.

66 Cohen, 2000, 87-89, 103-108.

Figure 118 San Pelayo casket, León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro

known carvers from that region.⁶⁷ In particular, ‘goggle’ eyes, inlaid with a hard black material, mark them apart from any known Ottonian or Salian ivory. The substance has not been tested, and may be jet, precious stones, or glass paste. Whilst inlaid eyes can be found in earlier Carolingian ivories, the Leonese examples are more likely to derive from the Islamic use of a similar technique in the eleventh century and from a wish to replicate the prominent black eyes of figures in some Mozarabic manuscripts.⁶⁸ Most of the ivory apostles stand under horseshoe arches, but St. Peter’s arch has been widened to accommodate his keys, and two of the

panels on the back have semi-circular arches decorated with a chequer pattern, which would be described as billet moulding on a Romanesque building. Although some of the foliate border decoration used on the arches would not be out of place further north, the ‘comma’ border that decorates the arch above St. Peter is more familiar from caliphal ivories, as are the downturned leaves used to fill the spandrels. The figure of Peter is also exceptional in the peninsula for the way that his bunch of long keys spells out his name, ‘Petrus’. This device had late antique origins and appeared on some Ottonian ivories, but not with the clarity found here.⁶⁹ Such playful positioning of names was more often used on Córdoba ivories, and it is possible that Petrus was also the baptismal name of the carver in this instance. The palm

⁶⁷ AMS, 1993, 238.

⁶⁸ For a Carolingian example of eyes inlaid with blue-black glass, see *Charlemagne der Grosse. Kunst*, 2014, cat. No. 2, 174–76; for an Islamic example, see *al-Andalus*, 1992, 203, cat. no. 6; Álvarez da Silva, 2014, 170.

⁶⁹ Bousquet, 1981, 29–4.8.

tree that fills the background of the St. Michael scene likewise has mainly Andalusí precedents. The reliquary was further lined with a taifa silk, and patterned with scrolls inhabited by birds, griffins, and hares, alongside bands of Kufic text that include the word 'kingship' (*mulk*). The sudden appearance of such an accomplished piece raises questions about its date, and the reliability of the inscription recording the donation, especially as we have the information only at one remove. Whether the carving was completed in 1059 or somewhat later, the highly innovative nature of the reliquary and its contradictory traits may be best explained by a collaboration between Leonese churchmen, a German goldsmith, and ivory carvers trained in al-Andalus.

According to the *Historia Silense* (*Seminense*), in 1063 the body of St. Isidore was brought from the taifa of Seville in a chest draped in a taifa silk presented by the ruler al-Mu'tadid. The translation was perhaps part of an early *paria* payment from Seville.⁷⁰ The large silver gilt house shrine (33 x 81.5 x 44.5 cm) thought to have held the saint's relics has none of the ambiguities of the casket of SS. John the Baptist and Pelagius.⁷¹ Five narrative panels, now out of order, tell the story of Adam and Eve: the Creation of Adam, the Temptation of Adam by Eve, the Accusation of Adam and Eve, the highly unusual Clothing of Adam and Eve, and the Expulsion from the Garden of Eden. A sixth panel depicts a solitary male figure in a knee-length tunic against a diaper pattern, who is very probably the penitent King Fernando. The lid has been replaced, but incorporates some of its original plaques including a frieze of figures from the court. It is generally accepted that the reliquary was crafted by a goldsmith from Salian Germany, because of the similarity

between its figures and those on the bronze doors of Hildesheim Cathedral, even if they were crafted almost fifty years earlier. Whether made in León or not, the reliquary was lined with two fabrics: the body of the chest with a taifa silk – perhaps the one from Seville that accompanied the relics – and the lid with embroidered squares containing animals, birds, and circles. In every other sense the casket was a clear import from the north, and through its archaic style an emphatic expression of Ottonian emulation. Although the taifa kingdoms had retained some of the metalworking expertise developed in Córdoba, there seems to have been a firm decision, in both León and Navarre in the mid-eleventh century, to have their *paria* silver and gold remodelled by German goldsmiths. The same decision does not seem to have applied to liturgical ivory carving. Although this may have been in part a pragmatic decision related to the availability of ivory carvers and goldsmiths, like the *paria* payments, it also had biblical authority. The Book of Numbers (31.22-23) says: 'Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead. Everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean'. Thus the metals tainted by their previous owners and by methods of acquisition had to be purified, but the ivory was subject to no such stricture. The expertise needed to make the reliquary of St. Isidore could have been a gift from Cluny, the silver and gold cleansed by Christian goldsmiths. Abbot Hugh of Cluny had maintained close connections with Germany and, as John Williams noted, he was the baptismal sponsor of the son of Henry III (r. 1017-1056) and Agnes of Poitou in 1051.⁷² In 1063, that son, Henry IV (r. 1050-1106) had not yet emerged from his turbulent minority, and León may have benefitted from this hiatus

70 Barton, 2000, *Historia Silense*, 56-60, paras. 96-102.

71 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 110, 239-44.

72 Williams, 2011a, 417-24.

in Salian patronage. The infanta Urraca, who ruled the double monastery of San Isidoro, donated a chalice in a very different Ottonian style, combining two reused antique sardonyx cups with goldwork, studded with gems and adorned with filigree.⁷³

A somewhat problematic document known as the *donatio* records a long list of precious objects purportedly donated to San Isidoro immediately after its consecration. In effect the document is an inventory of a large part of the church's treasure. It is also a celebration of that wealth through its delight in every noun and adjective describing the gold, precious stones, and ivory. Since it is not an original charter and perhaps written as late as the twelfth century, it may contain interpolations or even represent a compilation of several documents, and its contents must be treated with caution.⁷⁴ It lists the witnesses to the *donatio* and thus, if it can be trusted in this respect, records those who may have been present at the consecration: in addition to the immediate royal family, Fernando I's mother, Muniadonna; Queen Sancha's sister, Jimena; and bishops from Galicia and León were supplemented by the bishop of Calahorra from Navarre, the Catalan Bishop Bernard of Palencia, and by Bishop Pierre of Le Puy. The last two bishops had clear links with reform, Bernard to the Catalans, and Pierre to Cluny and the papacy. Pierre's uncle, Stephen, also bishop of Le Puy, had received his pallium from Pope Leo IX in 1051, and in 1033 he had been invited to consecrate an altar at Cluny. Bishop Pierre was also related to Odilo, the previous abbot of Cluny, who had close ties with the Ottonian emperors.⁷⁵ It has been suggested that the bishop of Le Puy was in León,

because he was passing on pilgrimage, but the excommunication of Bishop Cresconius of Iria and Compostela for his apostolic pretensions by Pope Leo IX at the council of Rheims in 1049 makes that motivation unlikely. Pierre was probably in León as a representative of the network of reforming churchmen.

None of the items listed in the *donatio* can be securely identified with any of the objects known from the treasury of San Isidoro, partly because the descriptions relate almost exclusively to the material and not the form.⁷⁶ The shrine of St. Isidore is notably absent from the list, which nonetheless includes an altar frontal of pure gold with emeralds, sapphires, other precious stones, and enamels, which sounds as if it resembled Estefania's gift to Santa María at Nájera. A range of small metalwork boxes, probably from the *taifa* kingdoms, are now associated with the San Isidoro treasury, but their origins await more research.⁷⁷ Despite the difficulty in identifying surviving ivories with those mentioned in the document, it remains probable that a casket with personifications of the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5: 3-10) and other ivory plaques were in León, either at the end of the reign of Fernando I or during that of Alfonso VI (r. 1065-1109).⁷⁸ The number of surviving pieces, and the stylistic and technical relationships between them, has led scholars to talk of an ivory 'workshop' based in León.⁷⁹ Whatever the reality of those working practices, ivory carving took place over a long enough period to facilitate artistic development. The description of an ivory cross 'in the likeness of Our Redeemer crucified' in the *donatio* is usually identified with a large

73 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 118, 254-55.

74 Martin López, 1995, 26-29; Blanco Lozano, 1987, 169-72.

75 Isla, 2006, 102-104; Cowdrey, 1970, 45.

76 Bango, 2001, 223-27.

77 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 44, 45, 46, 47, 120; Rosser-Owen, 2015, 39-64.

78 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 112, 113, 115, 117.

79 Franco Mata, 2006, 92-145.

ivory cross, intricately carved and originally gilded, which was at San Isidoro until 1869.⁸⁰ Such detail is unusual in descriptions of the period and may indicate the exceptional nature of this piece at the time. Alternatively, as inventories tend to accumulate details over time, it may help to confirm that the list belongs to a later period, perhaps around the time that San Isidoro was handed over to regular canons in 1148. Without the inscription that names King Fernando and Queen Sancha at the base of the vertical arm, this cross would also doubtless have been assigned to a different provenance and date. Indeed, it should be noted that there is no '*me fecit*' (I made it, or had it made) statement, so it is possible that the cross was made for the intercession of Fernando and Sancha – and not by them as is usually assumed – perhaps at the behest of their daughter, the infanta Urraca.

A large figure of Christ, crucified but alive, dominates the cross (fig. 119). His head inclines to the right; his large eyes, formed by burnished sapphires, look down on the viewer; locks of his braided hair fall onto his shoulders. The folds of his knotted loincloth hang with palpable weight, and his long feet rest heavily on the foot support. Details such as the braided hair and the complex knotting of the loincloth recall large wooden crucifixes like the tenth-century Gero Cross in Cologne. The San Isidoro ivory is less realistic but just as potent, and ultimately more Romanesque, expressing emotion above all through elongation of the body. A second ivory Christ figure (33 cm), the Carrizo Christ, has also survived from late-eleventh century León and is often attributed to the patronage of the infanta Urraca (fig. 120).⁸¹ The prominent eyes of this ivory Christ are set in

Figure 119 Ivory cross of Fernando and Sancha, León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid)



a large head, and framed with gold, whilst the body is disproportionately shorter (33.5 cm). The materials that make up the eyes have not been identified by scientific investigation, and it would be useful to know if they, like those of the image of Sainte Foy at Conques, could have been reused from a Roman statuette, and thus perhaps determined the size of the head. These two Christ figures represent different solutions to the same task, probably by two rival sculptors, although Williams thinks that the more distorted proportions of the Carrizo Christ suggest a later date.

Some of the carving on the reverse of the San Isidoro cross can be linked to the plaque on the lid of the St. John the Baptist and St. Pelagius

⁸⁰ AMS, 1993, cat. no. 111, 244-46; Park, 1973, 77-91.

⁸¹ AMS, 1993, cat. 114: 33 cm; for Urraca, see Caldwell, 1986, 19-25; Walker, 1998, 113-22.

Figure 120 León, ivory "Carrizo" Christ figure, Museo de León



Photograph: George Zarnecki
Image courtesy of the Conway Library, The Courtauld Institute of Art

casket. In both cases a Lamb of God, looking to the right and holding a small cross, is placed in the centre and surrounded by symbols of the four Evangelists. On the cross the beasts no longer have the scribal markings on their bodies that link their fellows on the casket to Andalusí traditions, but the head of the eagle of St. John is similarly aligned and his talons clasp the book in the same way. On the front of the cross, at the base of the vertical arm, a figure of Adam emerges from Hell, set against the same kind of diaper background that framed the figure of Fernando I on the shrine of St. Isidore. In technique and design, this cross outstrips

the earlier casket, especially in the dynamic movement of clambering figures. The edges of both arms contain a continuous frieze of small, naked, and often contorted, human figures and beasts. An angel reaches down to help one small figure into the celestial sphere. On the front, at the top of the vertical arm, the dove of the Holy Spirit flies down towards a small framed figure of the triumphant Christ. For the areas behind the arms of Christ, the carver employed very low relief and probably gilding. On the reverse of the cross, an inhabited scroll fills the areas between the Lamb of God in the centre and the Evangelist symbols at the terminals. On the upper vertical arm, addorsed lions spew out foliage, with a small mask inserted between their backs; on the lower section robust beasts rampage through encircling tendrils and palmette leaves. Marlene Park has plausibly compared the inhabited scrolls to manuscript illumination from Saint Vaast in Arras and Saint-Bertin at St-Omer, which could well be the source for this ornament, although these manuscripts do not provide close models for the human figures found on the San Isidoro cross.⁸² Other ivories could have also contributed to the invention of this remarkable piece, and many international references have been identified.⁸³ A small walrus ivory pendant cross with pierced decoration, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), probably an Anglo-Saxon product of the mid-eleventh century, exemplifies one kind of portable object that could have reached León. The iconography is complex and the plant scrolls varied even within this small piece (11.9 x 4.7 x 2.5 cm). On the reverse a Lamb of God in the centre and Evangelist symbol terminals are linked by vine scroll inhabited by quadrupeds and birds; on the lid an archer tangled in thick foliage points

⁸² Park, 1973, 77-91; Álvarez da Silva, 2014, 144-48.

⁸³ Ferrandis, 1935, 134.

his bow towards a bird.⁸⁴ A second ivory at the Victoria and Albert Museum, a crucified Christ remounted on an Ottonian reliquary cross, is another example of the type of Anglo-Saxon carving which could have inspired the San Isidoro cross.⁸⁵ Queen Sancha's brother, Alfonso V, had been part of an international diplomatic network that exchanged gifts with England and France, so it is quite possible that Queen Sancha could have owned ivories carved in England. The iconography of the San Isidoro cross suggests that it was made for the liturgical commemoration of Fernando and Sancha. Fernando I was to die in December 1065 shortly after the completion of San Isidoro, and Sancha was to follow him in 1067. The liturgical setting of Fernando I's death was recorded at the end of the *Historia Silense* (*Seminense*). The choice of psalms and canticles makes it clear that Fernando I, like the Ottonian emperors, looked to King David in the Old Testament as a mirror for kingship.⁸⁶

Aragón

Events in Aragón during the mid-1060s are shadowy and the subject of considerable scholarly dispute. It is possible to glimpse the importance of trade routes running through this region, the tolls to be collected from them, and the likely involvement of an established Jewish community, but scholars have paid most attention to the conquest of Barbastro in 1064.⁸⁷ Some have seen the pope and his legates as its promoters, and it has even been described as the first crusade.⁸⁸ Other historians think that

papal intervention was in the rear-guard and that Cluny might have been instrumental.⁸⁹ For present purposes the distinction is not critical: what matters here is the evidence that Barbastro provides for Aragón's international contacts and the nature of their interaction with the peninsula. The group of foreign adventurers and mercenaries included Hilduin of Roucy (Picardy), Duke William VIII of Aquitaine, and the Norman Robert Crispin.⁹⁰ Sources for this period are not plentiful, and it is not even certain whether Ramiro I or his son Sancho Ramírez was ruling Aragón at this point, although the involvement of Ermengol III, count of Urgell, in the enterprise seems clear. Their goal was the city of Barbastro, some sixty miles northeast of Zaragoza, ruled by al-Muqtadir. On the basis of excavations undertaken so far, Barbastro had the usual amenities of an Islamic city including some baths.⁹¹

The fullest account of the attack comes from the Arab historian Ibn Hayyān (d. 1075) who says that the besiegers, whom he defines as Norman and Southern French, massacred the men and took the women and children prisoner, and that they 'gained so many goods and possessions in Barbastro that it beggars description'.⁹² This influx of foreign soldiers introduced a note of fanaticism against the Muslims, which had been generally absent from the skirmishes and raiding that had constituted the everyday for the resident Christians and Muslims. To judge from Ibn Hayyān's reaction, even though he was writing at the end of his life and from the diminished city of Córdoba, it had a similar polarising effect on the Muslim

84 Williamson, 2010, 248-49.

85 Williamson, 2010, 238-41.

86 Prado-Vilar, 2009, 206-12; Fletcher, 2000, 147-60.

87 Nelson, 1978, 700; Lacarra, 1952, 5-19.

88 O'Callaghan, 2003, 24-27; Säbekow, 1931, 131-15.

89 Bishko, 1980, 56-57.

90 van Houts, 2000, no. 83, 270-71.

91 Cabañero Subiza, 2006, 75-86; Cabañero Subiza, 1989-1990, 173-218.

92 Ferreiro, 1983, 129-44; O'Callaghan, 2003, 24-27; Melville, 1992, 70-71.

population. For him, 'the city was purified from the filth of idolatry, and cleansed from the stains of infidelity and polytheism' after it was reclaimed. His text also took up a theme more familiar from Christian writing of the eighth century, which saw the defeat of the Visigoths as a punishment for disobedience of the Creator. Ibn Hayyān saw Barbastro as a portent: 'We are standing on the edge of a cliff, looking down on disaster'.⁹³ The duke of Aquitaine rode home with a large amount of booty and many slaves, but the local Christians had to deal with the aftermath.⁹⁴ Their gain was short-lived, and in 1065 al-Muqtadir retook Barbastro. Both Count Ermengol III of Urgell and Guillem, the son of Arnau Mir de Tost, were probably casualties in that conflict. This meant the end of the potential Urgell-Aragón alliance that had promised security and economic advantage. It had been sealed by marriage in 1065, when Sancha, the sister of Sancho Ramírez of Aragón, had become Ermengol III's fourth wife. After Ermengol III was killed, Sancha ruled the county on behalf of her stepson until his majority, when she returned to Aragón to be her brother's most steadfast ally.

A second repercussion was a change in the main function of the church of Sant Pere d'Àger, between Tremp and the taifa city of Balaguer, as both Count Ermengol III and Guillem, the son of Arnau Mir de Tost, were buried there, one perhaps in the Roman sarcophagus that remains in the village. From 1059 the Urgellian adventurer Arnau Mir de Tost and his wife, Arsendis, had centred their patronage on the regular canons at Àger, dedicated the church to St. Peter, and subjected it to the papacy. They had made the initial arrangement with Pope Nicholas II and sent a gift of 5000 gold Valencian solidi, which was to be followed by

a five-yearly census of ten gold solidi.⁹⁵ The association was confirmed in 1062 with Pope Alexander II, to whom they sent 3000 Valencian sueldos and ten black slaves. After the death of Ermengol III and their son in 1065, Arnau and his wife tried to involve Cluny in the foundation, possibly because they wished to obtain Cluniac intercession for both the deceased. Their plan did not succeed and Sant Pere d'Àger remained a Canonry directly dependent on the papacy. It is clear from Arnau Mir de Tost's will, however, that he maintained an attachment to Cluny, as in 1071 he left the abbey a quarter of his portable estate. In contrast, when his wife died three years before, she donated her 'mirror from Indian lands', together with her largest gold buckles, to the abbey of Sainte-Foy at Conques in the Auvergne.⁹⁶ The lower church at Àger had been completed c. 1040, and the upper church, using the lower structure as a crypt, was begun c. 1060 by Arnau Mir de Tost, but not completed until c. 1094.⁹⁷ Technically and stylistically the church belongs with monuments inspired by Sant Vicenç de Cardona, and thus looked towards Catalonia. Likewise, when a new cathedral church was consecrated by Bishop Arnulf at Roda de Isàvena (Ribagorça), in the presence of King Sancho Ramírez in 1067, the style chosen for this three-aisled church with a bell-tower was standard Early Southern Romanesque.

After Barbastro, evidence for intervention by papal reformers becomes more plentiful. The main figure is Hugh of Remiremont (c. 1020-c. 1099), also known as Hugh Candidus.⁹⁸ Hugh was a native of Lorraine, who was called to Rome by Pope Leo IX (d. 1054), where he became a member of a new group of international

93 Scales, 1994, 129-44; Sarrió, 2012, 8-9.

94 Delisle, 1887, 462; Watson, 1989, 232, n. 105.

95 Bishko, 1980, 57.

96 Bishko, 1980, 60.

97 Fité, 1994, 34-40.

98 Cushing, 2005, 98.

cardinals, as cardinal-priest of the Lateran church of San Clemente. Despite conflicting allegiances, he went on to promote the reforming vision of Pope Alexander II (d. 1073). His career as a papal legate is recorded from 1065, when he could be found at Nájera, and in 1067 he presided over a council at Llantadilla, near the river Pisuerga on the Leonese-Castilian border. The following year he condemned simony, the sale of offices or sacraments, at a council in Girona, after other meetings at Auch and Toulouse, north of the Pyrenees; he was to return in 1071.⁹⁹ Others worked with him: at Gerona, Frotard, the abbot of Saint-Pons-de-Thomières (Rodez) and, in the kingdoms further west, the Cluniac cardinal, Gerald of Ostia (d. 1077). With the loss of his Urgellian ally, the inexperienced King Sancho Ramírez was in an exposed and vulnerable position. This period of weakness coincided with the visit of Hugh Candidus, and Sancho Ramírez's response was to visit Rome in 1068 to put his kingdom under the protection of the pope.¹⁰⁰ When his queen, Isabella, gave him a son, he named him Peter. By 1071 Sancho Ramírez had a new wife, Felicia of Roucy, a union probably negotiated by the papal faction. Felicia was the daughter of the now deceased Hilduin of Roucy, and connected to the nobility of Picardy and Burgundy.¹⁰¹ She was sister to Eblo II of Roucy, who was in turn married to the daughter of the Norman Robert Guiscard. Barbastro had given the transpyrenean aristocracy a taste for the riches of the taifa kingdoms, which clearly justified the investment of one of their female kin in what was as yet an undeveloped kingdom. In the same year that Felicia arrived in Aragón, 1071, the Roman liturgy officially replaced the

Old Hispanic liturgy at San Juan de la Peña.¹⁰² This landmark of reform is usually attributed to Hugh Candidus. Whether it represented a wholesale replacement of the old liturgy in Aragón, or an isolated event, is more uncertain.

Artistic Experiments Amid the Political Chaos of the 1070s

The 1070s were unsettled years across the north of the peninsula, which gave the taifa kingdoms some respite from demands for *paria* payments. In Barcelona, Pere Ramon, Ramon Berenguer I's eldest son by his first wife, murdered Almodis of the Marche in 1071. He was excommunicated and spent the rest of his life in exile in a taifa kingdom.¹⁰³ Ramon Berenguer I's two sons by Almodis, confusingly known as Berenguer Ramon II and Ramon Berenguer II, were to inherit the county jointly on the death of their father in 1076, but this solution to sibling rivalry was not successful. In 1082 Berenguer Ramon II was accused of killing his brother while out hunting, lost his authority, and acquired the sobriquet 'the Fratricide'. The murdered brother had not long been married to Mafalda of Apulia, the eldest daughter of Robert Guiscard, and it was her new-born son, Ramon Berenguer III, who was to inherit the county of Barcelona, with Berenguer the Fratricide ruling only as regent. Such uncertainties did not favour major new architectural or other artistic projects. Some of the most dominant features, especially large bell-towers, had been completed in the 1060s, including Sant Cugat del Vallès (1063) and Vic (c. 1064). Ramon Berenguer II was buried alongside his grandmother, Ermessenda, in Girona Cathedral, another building marked by tall towers.

99 Hüls, 1977, 158-60.

100 Kehr, 1945, 303-304.

101 Thompson, 2002, 48.

102 Vones, 2007, 46 and 52 n. 1; Nelson, 1991, 19.

103 Kagay, 1993, 44; Nelson, 1991, 47.

To the west another partible solution failed to bring about peace. Shortly before his death in December 1065, Fernando I had divided his kingdom, as his father had done before him, between his three sons: the eldest, Sancho, received Castile and the homage of Navarre; Alfonso inherited León; and García was given Galicia. There is no record of any interest in building or other patronage on the part of the brothers in the early years of their reigns. Instead they concentrated on fighting one another. After the death of Fernando I in 1065, a Darwinian struggle began to unfold between his sons in Castile, Galicia, and León. Initially Sancho II was preoccupied with the eastern borders of his kingdom and the homage of Navarre. In 1070 he gave a donation to the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla, the 'great and favourite monastery of the kings of Navarre'.¹⁰⁴ The division of Fernando I's inheritance, which gave the Tierra de Campos, lands between the Cea and Pisuerga, to Alfonso VI, continued to rankle. This was the territory that Sancho might legitimately have expected to belong to Castile, since Fernando I held it when he was count of Castile. The deadlock was broken at the very beginning of 1072, with the decisive battle of Golpejera (30 km west of Pisuerga); Sancho II deposed Alfonso VI and seized the throne of León.¹⁰⁵ By May he had gone on to defeat García and to drive him into exile in the taifa kingdom of Seville. According to chroniclers, it was Alfonso VI's sister, Urraca, who came to his assistance and turned to Abbot Hugh of Cluny for support. As a result, Alfonso was not put to death or condemned to long-term imprisonment, but was sent into exile in the taifa kingdom of Toledo; Urraca meanwhile continued to work for Alfonso's return. Whether through Sancho II's inability

to gain acknowledgement of his rule in León or through Urraca's treachery, he was killed under the walls of Zamora on the road beside the river Duero. Alfonso VI left Toledo immediately and reclaimed his kingdom.

In Navarre, King Sancho García IV 'el Peñalen' had been harried by his cousin, Sancho II of Castile, until his death at Zamora in 1072. This gave the king of Navarre a brief period of peace before his assassination by his brother and sister in 1076, supposedly pushed off a cliff, the eponymous *peña*. This provides the most plausible window for a remarkable gold and ivory reliquary almost certainly given to the lower church of Yuso at San Millán de la Cogolla by Sancho García IV. The years 1072 to 1076 also fall within the slightly longer period identified by Isidro Bango Torviso, 1067-1076, based on the royal and monastic figures depicted in the panels applied to the lid. In 1074 both Sancho Garcés IV 'el Peñalen' and Alfonso VI of León gave donations to San Millán de la Cogolla on the boundaries of Castile and Navarre. Yet again the leading monastery of La Rioja was the object of competitive piety. The king of Navarre would also have had the resources for the reliquary between 1069 and 1073. In 1069 al-Muqtadir of Zaragoza renewed a *paria* agreement with Navarre, which prevented Sancho Garcés IV from fighting alongside Christians or Muslims who attacked Zaragoza, in return for 1000 gold coins a month for the duration of the pact.¹⁰⁶ The arrangement was renewed in 1073, although the emphasis shifted to potential threats from Sancho Ramírez of Aragón, but it still agreed to pay Sancho Garcés IV of Navarre 12,000 mancuses of gold *per annum*. The large and luxurious reliquary of San Millán (58 x 103 x 33 cm) would have represented a substantial portion of the *paria* income owed to the

¹⁰⁴ Reilly, 1988, 44.

¹⁰⁵ Reilly, 1988, 62-67.

¹⁰⁶ Lacarra, 1965, 264.

church.¹⁰⁷ The ivory may have been purchased with the gold or it may have been an additional gift. Either way, the acquisition suggests that the ivory trade that flourished under the Cordoban caliphs was continuing with their taifa successors, or that a number of tusks had been stockpiled. One of the ivory panels, now lost, depicted the arrival of the ivory tusks at the monastery, delivered by a man labelled 'Vigila negotiator' to a colleague called Petrus.¹⁰⁸ The title '*negotiator*' does not necessarily denote a merchant, as it was sometimes given to a monk from a monastery who managed the acquisition of goods on behalf of his monastery.

The repoussé goldwork on the reliquary has been lost, and for knowledge of that we have to rely on a 1601 description by Prudencio de Sandoval.¹⁰⁹ The majority of the ivory panels survive along with the wooden core and some of its textile lining. Some of the panels were remounted on a new casket at San Millán in 1944; others are in museums: in the State Hermitage Museum at St. Petersburg, the Bargello in Florence, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. The majority of the panels tell the story of the life and miracles of St. Aemilian and follow a tenth-century illuminated copy of the *Life of St. Aemilian* by Braulio (El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio, Sig. a. II, 9).¹¹⁰ This was remarkably innovative for the period, when most reliquaries across Europe did not yet display saints' lives. Generic or biblical scenes, as on the San Isidoro casket, were popular choices. Other smaller ivory plaques on the San Millán reliquary show figures from the court and the monastery, including the king's brother, Ramiro, Abbot Blas, and the scribe Munio.

Other figures, according to Sandoval, were depicted in repoussé. As these included Sancho Garcés IV and his queen, Plasencia, these gold panels may have been reserved for the most important figures. Most of the literature on this piece assigns it to German craftsmanship on the basis of a small ivory panel that shows two craftsmen, the master Engelramus, and his apprentice son, Redolfus (fig. 121). They are portrayed in the process of carrying out their craft, which has usually been described as ivory carving. However, Bango Torviso has pointed out that Engelramus appears to be polishing a large flat panel with a tool that is used today

Figure 121 San Millán de la Cogolla (Logroño), ivory panel of Engelramus and Redolfus (State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg)



Photograph: Vladimir Terebenin

¹⁰⁷ AMS, 1993, cat no. 125 a-g, 260-66.

¹⁰⁸ Goldschmidt, 1926, no. 87; Bango, 2007a, 152-53 (Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin, no. inv. 3008).

¹⁰⁹ AMS, 1993, 260-61.

¹¹⁰ Bango, 2007a, 39-41.

for gold leaf.¹¹¹ Sandoval identified the makers of the reliquary as two figures on a gold panel, an unnamed master and an apprentice (*discipulus*) called Simeon. Using these two pieces of evidence, Bango Torviso has argued that Engelramus and Redolfus were responsible for the goldwork on the reliquary, whilst peninsular craftsmen, a master and Simeon, carried out the ivory carving. Sufficient similarities exist between the techniques of one or more of the carvers of the San Millán reliquary and those who worked on the casket of SS. John and Pelagius for San Isidoro at León to suggest either that they were the same or at least had some kind of contact. Different patrons and models, as well as a time lapse, might well account for the differences.¹¹² Although a few other ivories have been assigned to this period, the number of craftsmen with this particular skill was probably small. Navarre could have taken advantage of the chaos in León and Castile c. 1070 to acquire suitably accomplished sculptors.¹¹³ If Bango is correct about the identification of the craftsmen, the San Millán reliquary may be an explicit case of collaboration between German metalworkers and ivory carvers of caliphal tradition. Although each artist would have had his own area of responsibility, such collaboration might have offered considerable opportunities for the exchange of ideas and techniques between highly skilled craftsmen. In particular, the matrices and moulds used by the goldsmiths may have helped the ivory carvers to develop a new figurative style. The possible repercussions of such an experience are substantial, whether the craftsmen continued to work in Navarre or elsewhere.

111 Bango, 2007a, 58-59; Campbell, 1991, 117-201.

112 Lasko, 1972, 157.

113 For figures who may have helped to liaise between León and Navarre, see Álvarez da Silva, 2014, 477-84, 533.

One of the earliest attempts to emulate Andalusí stone carving may have resulted in an unusual font found at San Isidoro in León. Crudely carved narrative scenes decorate three of its faces, with tituli that link it plainly to baptism (fig. 122). Two affronted lions above a foliate scroll occupy the fourth side of this rectangular basin (111 x 63 cm). The lions' heads face forward and their legs are stilted in a distinctive Andalusí fashion. The shape and size of the basin recall 'Āmirid marble examples displayed in palaces and gardens, in particular that reused in Granada by the Zīrid ruler, Badis (1038-73), and later by a Nasrid sultan; the relief from Chelas, with three lions above a vegetal scroll provides another possibly relevant comparison.¹¹⁴ One possible context for this unique piece could be the brief conquest of Córdoba, early in 1075, by al-Mam'un, ruler of Toledo, with support from his ally, Alfonso VI. The lions on the Cordoban basin are usually seen as traditional symbols of power, and their transition to León may have carried a similar meaning. It appears that the idea travelled without a craftsman who could execute it successfully, and no comparable attempts have survived.

Some of the richest and most innovative buildings of the taifa kingdoms were in progress during the middle of the eleventh century, in Zaragoza on the palace of the Aljafería, and in Toledo on the palace of al-Mam'un. While battles for power were underway in the Christian kingdoms in the early 1070s, relatively little building took place. Two aristocratic women founded Benedictine monasteries in the 1060s, which may have been in construction during the 1070s: Elvira Sánchez, widow of Fernando Díaz, and Fernando I's mother, Mayor, also known as Muniadonna. Elvira's monastery was

114 Fernández González, 2007, 5-36; AMS, 1993, cat. no. 34, 88-90. For the Chelas lions, see Chapter 5.

Figure 122 León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, stone font (?)

Photograph: Real Colegiata de San Isidoro

San Salvador de Nogal de las Huertas, on the banks of the river Carrión, north of the main road that ran between Burgos and León.¹¹⁵ Two inscriptions say that Elvira had the monastery built in 1063, and a document (c. 1057-1060) records the donation that enabled her to undertake the project. Fernando I, Queen Sancha, and the bishops of Palencia, León, and Astorga witnessed the donation, which stipulated that the abbot was to build a hospice for the poor as well as the monastery.¹¹⁶ Muniadonna's monastery was only some twenty kilometres away from Nogal in Frómista, close to the contested lands of Muniadonna's maternal family. Her charter says that she had already begun

to build the monastery of San Martín close to Frómista and had settled a population around the church. In addition to the arrangements for masses and vigils, 'for the health of her soul', she freed men and women 'whom she had brought up'. They had been Saracens but were now Christians, and the conversions were probably recent given her concern for the firmness of their faith. The duties of these former slaves are unknown, and some or all of them may have worked the land or been domestic servants, but it is also possible that they included craftsmen who worked on the construction of the monastery of St. Martin. It used to be thought that the standing churches at Nogal de las Huertas and at Frómista were those built by Elvira and Muniadonna, but the church at Nogal is now dated to the 1090s, and Frómista between then

¹¹⁵ Mann, 2009, 84-87.

¹¹⁶ Herrero de la Fuente, 1988, doc. 615, 314-17.

and the first decades of the twelfth century; given the modest size of San Isidoro in 1063, it is unlikely that Muniadonna built the large church now standing at Frómista. A consecration was held at the cathedral of Astorga in 1069, but nothing is known about that building, which was completely rebuilt at the order of Alfonso VI and his second queen, Constance of Burgundy, under Bishop Osmundo (1082-1096).¹¹⁷ On 10 November 1073, a testament of Bishop Pelayo of León says that a large curia, including King Alfonso VI, his sisters Urraca and Elvira, bishops and abbots from across the kingdom, and a large number of nobles, met at León to celebrate the day of dedication and the restoration of the cathedral. This was probably the culmination of work begun some ten years before under Fernando I. The bishop recounts the ancient Roman origins of the site and its destruction by the Muslims. He thanks the members of the royal family for their support which has enabled him to repair the cathedral, to build a new apsed oratory chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. Cyprian, and to fill it with liturgical books and objects, including a large silver cross from Urraca, the king's sister, a wooden crucifix decorated with gold and gems, a vast array of vestments, and a silk altar frontal. A baptistery, refectory, cloister, and houses had been provided for the canons.¹¹⁸ Bernard Reilly has proposed that the marriage of Alfonso VI to Inés, daughter of Duke William of Aquitaine, may have been agreed at this grand occasion, as she arrived the following year.¹¹⁹

In Aragón, a small church at Iguácel has given rise to a great deal of art historical controversy (fig. 123). Kingsley Porter brought this monument to general attention in 1928 because of an inscription that supposedly dated it to

Figure 123 Iguácel, church of Santa María, exterior



1072, mounted above the west door.¹²⁰ As well as emphasising the symbolic importance of the doorway, it states that the church was built at the order of Count Sancho Galíndez and his wife Doña Urraca, dedicated to St. Mary, and completed in 1072, when King Sancho Ramírez was reigning in Aragón.¹²¹ The king had indeed granted the site in February 1068 to Count Sancho Galíndez, his old tutor, whose family were supporters of reform; their son Jimeno was to become abbot of Montearagón. The church of Nuestra Señora at Iguácel is simple in plan with a single-aisled nave, once covered by a contemporary barrel vault. A half-dome

¹¹⁷ Whitehill, 1941, 210.

¹¹⁸ Bango, 2004, 51-53; Ruiz Asencio, 2000, 439-47.

¹¹⁹ Reilly, 1988, 79.

¹²⁰ Porter, 1928, 111-27; Whitehill, 1941, 241-43.

¹²¹ Martínez de Aguirre, 2011, 229-36.

covers the semi-circular apse, and a bell-tower is located on the north side. The southeast was the most impressive approach, where two small windows relieve the east wall of the tower; two more substantial windows are let into the south wall of the church and three into the wall of the apse. The articulation of the walls, including two pilasters on the apse and a moulded frame on the south wall, suggests that the rough masonry was originally covered in plaster and painted. The interior of the church is almost entirely plain and was doubtless also covered in painted plaster.¹²² An arcade of blind arches with sculpted capitals articulates the apse. This feature, along with the corbel table, engaged shafts in the window recesses, sculpted capitals, and roll and billet moulding over the west door, has caused scholars to question whether the date of 1072 on the inscription refers to the whole ensemble or, as is now generally agreed, only to the main structure.¹²³ The sculpted architectural features fit much better with work of the late 1090s or even the early twelfth century, and make best sense as a refurbishment. The inscription was probably added as part of that decorative campaign, adapted from the foundation charter. The second part of the inscription, which runs onto the south wall, names the scribe 'of these letters', Azena, and the master 'of these pictures', Galindo Garcez, a combination that may also imply that Iguácel originally may have had an illuminated charter, similar to that of Santa María at Nájera. If this analysis is correct, in 1072 one of the magnates closest to the Aragonese monarch was still building a simple version of Early Southern Romanesque, with no suggestion of the Romanesque features that were to come into

fashion over the next two decades. The small structure at the castle of Loarre, now known as the church of Santa María, is even more modest than the first phase at Iguácel; it may have been used by the canons of St. Peter established there by Sancho Ramírez in 1071.¹²⁴

After the chaos of the early years of his reign, Alfonso VI of León and Castile began anew. In 1073 he made a donation to connect his rule with some of the most successful aspects of his father's reign.¹²⁵ He had not yet had time to reclaim the *paria* payments owed to him, so he had to use property. The estate he chose for this donation, San Isidro de Dueñas, a monastery south of Palencia in the Tierra de Campos, had historical reverberations and reformist connections. The area long associated with wealthy Hispano-Romans and Visigothic kings was the one chosen by Elvira and Muniadonna for their monasteries. San Isidro de Dueñas had been built over a Roman villa, was close to the church of San Juan de Baños attributed to King Recceswinth, claimed foundation by King Alfonso III of Asturias in the early tenth century, and probably had support from Fernando I. The diocese of Palencia and its Catalan bishop, Bernard II, continued to be a centre of religious reform under Alfonso VI, as it had been since the time of his grandfather, Sancho III of Navarre. On 29 December 1073, the anniversary of the death of his father, Alfonso VI gave San Isidro de Dueñas to Cluny and asked for intercession on behalf of his father.¹²⁶ This charter incorporated the same verse of the canticle 'Benedictus Dominus Deus Israhel patris nostri', (I Chron. 29) that, according to the *Historia Silense* (*Semirensis*), Fernando I had recited on his deathbed, a canticle that

122 The paintings in the apse date from the fifteenth century.

123 Mann, 2009, 111-12; Moralejo, 1975, 142-43; Martínez de Aguirre, 2011, 229-32.

124 Mann, 2009, 133; Poza, 2009, 59-64.

125 Bishko, 1980, 17-18.

126 Bruel, 1888, 560-62.

linked him to King David and the Ottonian emperors.¹²⁷

Gerald of Ostia, a Cluniac papal legate, was operating in Alfonso VI's kingdom in the same year. A *scholasticus* from Regensburg, previous grand prior of Cluny, and senior cardinal, Gerald seems to have been adept at negotiating matters in the peninsula.¹²⁸ Two further gifts to Cluny followed the example of San Isidro de Dueñas. In 1076, Countess Teresa of the Banū Gómez family, counts of Carrión and Saldaña, and possibly Alfonso VI's cousin on his mother's side, gave Cluny the monastery of San Zoilo at Carrión de los Condes, in the strategic area of Tierra de Campos.¹²⁹ In 1079 Alfonso VI ceded his uncle's foundation of Santa María at Nájera to Cluny, ostensibly to mark the arrival of his new queen, Constance of Burgundy.¹³⁰ It was probably also conceived as an act of penance on his father's behalf, and as a political decision, because it suited Alfonso that Cluny should occupy this site in La Rioja close to the Castile-Navarre border. To Cluny it offered regular income from the estates and from trade along the road to France. Although Cluny had the strongest links with León and Castile, a Catalan monastery was also donated to Cluny around the same time. In 1079, the viscount of Cardona, Ramon Folch, gave the monastery of San Pedro de Casserres, outside Vic, to Abbot Hugh of Cluny, and asked for intercession for himself, his brother, and his wife.¹³¹ The relationship with Cluny, set up by Arnau Mir de Tost, was apparently still alive in the hands of a man whom Arnau had protected during his minority.

Having established his rule, Alfonso VI was free to exert his military superiority over the taifa kingdoms. In 1075 he went on campaign to assert his right to the *paria* payments from Granada and Seville, returning with 30,000 dinars of back payments. Alfonso VI was immediately transformed into one of the richest monarchs in Europe.¹³² He made a progress through his new kingdoms and, with his largesse, began to knit them together. First he went to the far west of his territory, to Santiago de Compostela, where he gave a donation for a new cathedral. His second visit in 1075 was to Oviedo, where he gave enough gold and silver to make a large reliquary for the cathedral, the *arca santa*, which bears an inscription acknowledging Alfonso VI and his sister Urraca (fig. 124).¹³³ The *arca santa* is exceptional for its survival, as nearly all the altar frontals were melted to release their gold and silver in later centuries. It was severely damaged by a bomb in 1934, but carefully restored in accordance with photographs taken before the explosion. Gómez Moreno, who was involved throughout, took the liberty of restoring the date on the reliquary, which has led to considerable scholarly debate. Bernard Reilly pointed out that the charter, which describes the opening of the wooden box before it was encased in silver-gilt, had been interpolated, and for many years the reliquary was re-dated to the twelfth century. However, further archival work by Raquel Alonso Álvarez has relocated it to the eleventh century.¹³⁴ In its style and its repoussé technique, the reliquary recalls metalwork of Lower Saxony, and was doubtless produced by a goldsmith trained in the Germanic tradition, probably linked to the workshop that made the shrine of San Isidoro for Alfonso VI's father, Fernando I. As I have

¹²⁷ Bishko, 1984, 50; Prado-Vilar, 2009, 206-207.

¹²⁸ Reilly, 1988, 97; Caspar, 1955, 92-94.

¹²⁹ Senra, 2006, 233-267.

¹³⁰ Reilly, 1988, 107.

¹³¹ Bruel, 1888, 668-69.

¹³² Walker, 2011, 391-412.

¹³³ AMS, 1993, cat. no. 124, 259-60.

¹³⁴ Alonso, 2007-2008, 17-29.

Figure 124 Oviedo Cathedral, *Arca Santa*

Photograph: Arxiu Mas

recently maintained, iconologically the *arca santa* was a subtle but explicit celebration of Alfonso VI's God-sanctioned reign that referenced the narrative of Exodus.¹³⁵ The front panel is highly traditional with Christ in a mandorla supported by angels, and two ranks of apostles under arcades. But it is distinguished from the surviving northern examples by the pseudo-Kufic inscription that borders this main panel. Although this apparent clash of Christian and Islamic cultures may be symbolic and represent a triumphalist use of *paria* precious metals that were melted to create it, the pseudo-Kufic frame, as a familiar feature from Islamic boxes, may do no more than denote the sumptuous

nature of the object.¹³⁶ The back panel is covered in a diaper pattern, which recalls the decoration behind the figure of Fernando I on the shrine of St. Isidore. The side panels display scenes from the life of Christ. To the right the infancy of Christ from the Annunciation to the Flight into Egypt, and on the left an Ascension scene alongside St. Michael killing the dragon. The selection and ordering of these scenes suggest that they had particular significance for Alfonso VI and his circle. The lid of the *arca santa* portrays an extended Crucifixion with Christ on the Cross, the Virgin Mary, St. John, and the two thieves, all incised into the flat surface.

¹³⁵ Walker, 2011, 391-412; for an alternative view see Harris, 1995b, 82-93.

¹³⁶ Dodds, 2007, 359-61.

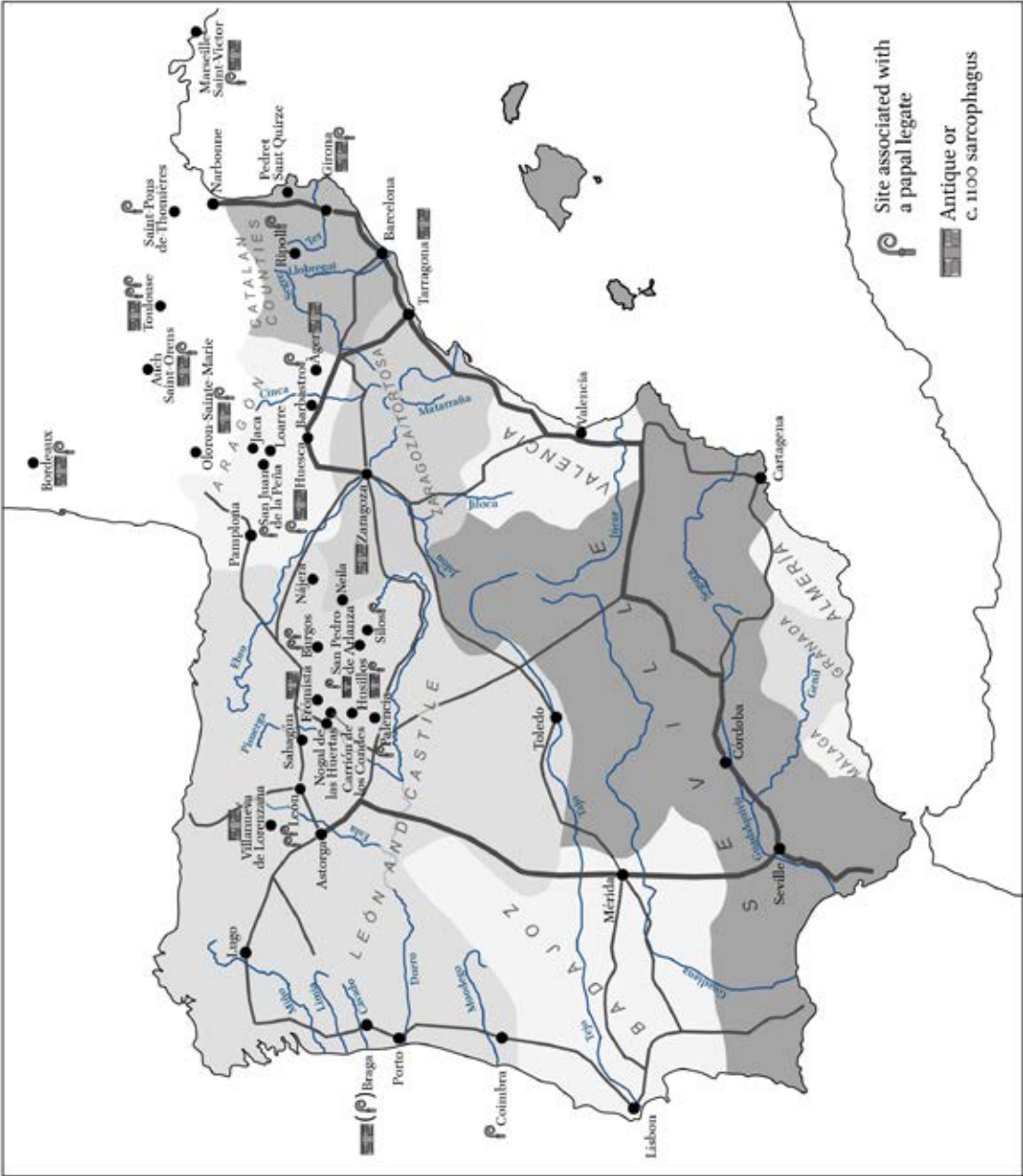
Alfonso VI's third visit in 1075 was to Sahagún, to the monastery of SS. Facundus and Primitivus, which was to become his favourite retreat. Sahagún lay next to the river Cea, and was thus strategically placed, not only on the old road from the Pyrenees to Astorga and into Galicia, but also on the Leonese boundary of the Tierra de Campos. Alfonso VI's personal gift here was a silver altar retable; now lost, it is known only from a sixteenth-century description by Ambrosio de Morales, which suggests that the frontal had a design similar to the front of the *arca santa* but lacked the pseudo-Kufic frame.¹³⁷ In the same year, 1075, Alfonso VI gave a palace that he owned in Burgos to be the site of a new Castilian cathedral, perhaps signalling the importance of the cathedrals in the process of reform. Burgos would become a major centre for trade as well as for pilgrims. Alfonso VI seems to have been creating a practical, political, and spiritual route through Castile, León, and Galicia, building on his uncle's earlier plans. When Sancho García IV of Navarre was killed in 1076, both Sancho Ramírez and Alfonso VI moved quickly to take over his lands. Sancho Ramírez became king of Navarre and Aragón, whilst Alfonso VI annexed La Rioja. Sancho Ramírez now had both passes over

the Pyrenees, Somport and Roncesvalles, and a great opportunity for trade and tax. Alfonso VI took the larger portion of territory and the most fertile land.

The period covered by this chapter saw considerable change. Religious reform was seeping into all Christian parts of the peninsula, its proponents attracted by the immense wealth pouring into the northern kingdoms. Although the most important routes were still the ones that ran roughly north-south, the roads that carried the *paria* payments, running east-west, were becoming more significant, as merchants, diplomats, and churchmen increasingly travelled between the northern kingdoms. Sculptural expertise seems to have accompanied the ivory, whilst goldsmiths, the most privileged of craftsmen, came from across the Pyrenees to purify and remould the metals. Andalusí skills were beginning to interact with those provided by the network of reformers with some remarkably innovative results, but so far these were limited to the sumptuary arts. Despite the death of al-Mam'un, ruler of Toledo in 1075, whilst attempting to annex Córdoba, life in the taifa kingdoms also seemed relatively stable. However, this prosperous balancing act was about to collapse.

¹³⁷ Morales, 1985, 36-37.

Map VIII Map of the Peninsula c. 1085



8 The Making of Romanesque

Reform and Synergy

Three events dominated the 1080s in the peninsula: the formal introduction of the Roman liturgy to León and Castile in 1080; Alfonso VI's occupation of Toledo in 1085; and the victory of the Almoravids at Zalaca (Sagrajas) over the same king in the following year.¹ The first of these was the tangible result of closer contact with the papacy. The second gave unprecedented access to taifa culture and those who made it. The third event was to put an end to Alfonso VI's expansionist plans and would in the long term seriously exacerbate relations between Christians and Muslims within the peninsula. It also hampered the production of art and architecture in the taifa kingdoms. The 1090s saw the rise of the kingdom of Aragón and the conquest of Huesca. By the end of the first decade of the twelfth century, Alfonso VI was dead, and his kingdom ruled by his daughter, Queen Urraca, who had entered into a second marriage with the new king of Aragón, Alfonso I, known as 'the Battler'. His foes were the same Almoravids who systematically toppled the taifa kings. Although Queen Urraca's reign was not the chaotic disaster that was once assumed, during this period the Christian kingdoms faced economic and political challenges of a new order. In the midst of all these upheavals, architectural and sculptural production in the northern kingdoms was transformed, acquiring the label 'Romanesque'.²

Early Romanesque art in Spain and Portugal is hotly contested territory. It has proved almost impossible for scholars to avoid the arguments over style and precedence that were first raised

by those with a nationalist stance. 'Spain or Toulouse' has remained either an explicit or implicit agenda in many studies, a question that is accompanied by assumptions around pilgrimage, reconquest, and the flow of 'influence' down the roads from France into Spain.³ Throughout this book I have sought to adjust that balance by giving due weight to routes that crossed hypothetical divides. This chapter will look at two other networks that I believe intersected and worked together to bring about much of the peninsula's contribution to Romanesque art. One is a specific social network, the friendship circle of Pope Gregory VII and his successors. The other set of contacts concerns Alfonso VI's new role as ruler of Toledo and the direct access to certain kinds of artistic expertise that went with the acquisition of this large territory. The Toledan nexus continued the same methods of artistic exchange experienced over earlier centuries: booty, diplomatic gifts, ransom, and slavery, but under more explicit Christian control. Interventions from north of the Pyrenees built on relationships initiated earlier in the eleventh century were now bringing about real change in the peninsula. Ian Robinson and Kriston Rennie, amongst others, have looked at the work of papal legates using the methodology of the friendship circle in other situations.⁴ Church councils and other documentary evidence reveal that a tight group of reformers worked with the popes and great monastic houses to penetrate the peninsula. The most important

1 Walker, 1998b, 21-38.

2 Reilly, 1982; Martin, 2006.

3 Mann, 1997, 156-64; Williams, 2010b, 185-200.

4 Robinson, 1990; Rennie, 2008, 475-96; Rennie, 2007, 166-80.

figures were those designated as papal legates.⁵ Whilst territorial and *paria* rivalry within the peninsula may have dominated the relationship between the cousins, Alfonso VI of León and Sancho Ramírez of Aragón, papal legates could operate without hindrance across such boundaries. They were excellently placed to create a new matrix that could be the agency not only for reform but also for artistic interaction. Collaborative working was at the heart of this network, as Gregory VII had established a balanced system in which the authority of legates was both curtailed and strengthened because they had to operate in conjunction with other legates, archbishops, or abbots.⁶ It is accepted that the abbey of Cluny played a major role in liturgical change in the peninsula, but its wider influence has long been a matter of debate. Seen within the context of the friendship circle, some of the ambiguities begin to dissolve. In artistic terms, senior members of the circle had an identifiable interest in Roman and early Christian sarcophagi, which provided stylistic, iconographic, and physical material for these early years of Romanesque sculpture on both sides of the Pyrenees. On the southern side such sarcophagi had acquired additional resonances in the later tenth century when they were reused for the burial of kings and counts who played important roles in the development of Christian polities. Further south in al-Andalus, they were appreciated for the quality of their carving and their embodiment of the classical legacy.

In contrast with earlier sporadic localised carving focused on ivory reliquaries, in the 1080s monumental stone carving suddenly came to the fore. Across the lands of the Western Church, a new approach to art and

architecture was emerging, which has come to be called Romanesque.⁷ It may be no coincidence that this enthusiasm for crafted rock coincided in the peninsula with an equal rise in the influence of the papacy and dedications to St. Peter (San Pedro, Sant-Pere), the rock of the Church. Despite a different dedication, one tiny church in Castile, San Miguel de Neila (Burgos), confirms the association through four foundational inscriptions of 1087 studied by Eduardo Carrero.⁸ These explicitly refer to the newly introduced Roman liturgy that replaced the Old Hispanic rite and conjure the ritual acts, readings, and sounds of the foundation ceremony. Extracts from the antiphonal liturgy for the dedication of a church according to the Roman rite were engraved on stone slabs that defined the church as the 'firmly built and well founded' house of the Lord (*domus domini*) and as a gateway to heaven (*porta coeli*). The inscriptions appropriately emphasise the limestone fabric (*labor(em) petracale*), for this small church was to be constructed of ashlar blocks. Some of the phrases used in these inscriptions can be linked directly to manuscripts that set out this new liturgy and specifically to antiphonal singing and a sermon. The homily for the dedication of a church talks about a wise man who 'built his house upon a rock' so it withstood the floods and the winds, and of a 'wise king' who seeks out 'good fruit' for the construction and ministry of his temple.⁹ The clear embodiment of this liturgical ideology is all the more surprising because this small church is in a remote mountainous site in the Sierra de la Demanda, far from León. Much closer to the capital, a new cathedral of Astorga had been consecrated at the end of the previous year. The inscription that records that event references

5 Robinson, 1990, 147-48; Rennie, 2007, 179.

6 Robinson, 1990, 149-56; Robinson, 2004, 326-28; Rennie, 2006, 95-115.

7 Fernie, 2014, 5-9.

8 Carrero, 2005, 385-402.

9 London, British Library, Add. MS 30848, fol. 47-51.

the same liturgy, suggesting that an awareness of the physical structure of the church as an expression of reform may have operated across dioceses. However, it would be a mistake to think that the introduction of the new liturgy demanded new buildings. Indeed tenth- and early eleventh-century structures continued to function, whilst cleansed and rededicated mosques were employed in occupied areas, with no more than a change of furniture and decoration. The process of implementation of the new rite would not be entirely smooth or without resistance, and its artistic expression would be concomitantly diverse. Within the framework that came with the new liturgy, with foreign churchmen and their even more influential papal advisors, there was considerable room for inventive local responses. This can be seen in the production of manuscripts, and Julie Harris has recently drawn attention to one possible instance at San Millán de la Cogolla, where ivory panels from a reliquary may have promoted its patron saint, an obscure hermit called Felix, as a form of resistance.¹⁰

Changes to the North-South Nexus

In May 1085 Alfonso VI occupied Toledo after a short siege. It had ceased to be viable for him to support the weak rule of al-Qadir, the grandson of his old ally, but the kingdom of León and Castile was now vast, and dominated all the other Iberian polities, Christian and Muslim.¹¹ Alfonso VI was continuing to draw on substantial *paria* payments from Zaragoza, Seville, and Granada. He had become immensely rich and powerful, receiving tribute with ceremony worthy of a caliph.¹² Now married to Con-

stance of Burgundy, niece of Abbot Hugh of Cluny, Alfonso was also closely bound into the aristocracy of Europe. However, his decision to rule Toledo in his own name and to lay siege to Zaragoza proved to have repercussions as great as those that Sanchuelo's manoeuvre had set in train nearly 80 years before. The political and military consequences are well known: the remaining taifa rulers panicked and sought assistance from the Berber Almoravids (*murābiṭūn*) of Morocco under Yūsuf ibn-Tāshfīn, who agreed to come in October 1086 to fight the Leonese and Castilian forces.¹³ On the battlefield of Zalaca they inflicted a significant defeat on Alfonso VI's army, and many soldiers died in a chaotic retreat. The Almoravids would return to stay in the early 1090s and to take control of all the taifa kingdoms except Zaragoza. These Berbers were not all fanatical or intolerant, as once characterised, but they did introduce a certain religious rigour and reform that interacted with papal reforming pressure on the north to change the psychological ambience of the peninsula.¹⁴ Their military force not only reduced and ultimately halted the payment of *parias*, but also limited the flow of gold and ivory from North Africa, which continued to be the focus of the Almoravid empire.¹⁵ For a time Alfonso VI could still call on the old *parias* of Zaragoza, although its rulers had additional obligations to Aragón and to Barcelona. By the first years of the twelfth century payments had been reduced to the occasional dribble. Alfonso managed to hold on to Toledo, despite the enormous demands of such a large conquest in terms of territorial control and population management, but it did not become a site for

10 Walker, 1998a; Harris, 2014, 381-97.

11 Reilly, 1988, 127-30, 134-135 and 173.

12 Menéndez Pidal, 1947, 27-41.

13 Reilly, 1988, 183.

14 Brett 1997, 99-105; García-Sanjuán, 2008 78-81; Fierro, 1994; Ettahiri, 2014, 144-49.

15 Miller, 2009, 80-82.

significant new Christian building until the thirteenth century.

Toledo may have occupied a privileged place in exchanges between the north and south since the tenth century, and Alfonso VI knew the kingdom from his time in exile and during his subsequent alliance with al-Mam'un. He had previous diplomatic dealings with the Mozarabic Christians in the city, but there is little evidence to suggest that they acted to undermine al-Qadir.¹⁶ In 1085 Alfonso declared his affection for their community and granted them six churches in the city, although there is no specific mention of the liturgy to be celebrated in them.¹⁷ Further evidence of his sensitivity to their position was the new governor appointed to run the city, as Sisnando Davídez was originally a Mozarab from Seville who had governed Coimbra for some ten years.¹⁸ All this may have helped to soften the appointment of the Frenchman, Bernard, who left his abbacy of Sahagún to become archbishop of Toledo in 1086. Alfonso VI seems to have set out to behave towards the Muslims and Jews in a similarly fair manner. Al-Qadir's supporters had been allowed to leave with him, initially for Cuenca and finally for Valencia. Other elite Muslims also chose to leave, but some stayed and, as Alfonso VI took possession of all al-Qadir's property according to the terms of the surrender, much of the labour force probably also remained.¹⁹ The acquisition of a population that included artists and craftsmen of high calibre may even have helped to shape art and architecture further north. Alfonso granted the Muslims of Toledo continued use of the Great Mosque and at least two other mosques, an agreement that was soon to be subverted by his

new archbishop, who seized the Great Mosque and consecrated it as his cathedral.²⁰ The Jewish community had a separate agreement. Pope Gregory VII had criticised Alfonso VI for allowing Jews to dominate Christians, which he presented as the exaltation of Synagogue over the Church, and it is possible that Gregory VII's papal legates may have found Jewish biblical exegesis particularly challenging.²¹ Yitzhak Baer was probably correct to see the pope's comment as a reference to the use of Jewish officials as diplomats in the administration, an established practice in the peninsula, and Alfonso VI may, for example, have sent Jewish ambassadors to the ruler of Seville to collect tribute.²² In his chronicle *De rebus Hispaniae*, the thirteenth-century archbishop of Toledo, De Rada, mentions a Jew, nicknamed Cidellus who, because of his industry and knowledge of medicine, is described as a close associate of the king (*familiaris*).²³ Elite members of the Jewish community, often trained in medicine and other scientific matters, were to continue to serve at Christian courts in the peninsula for another three centuries, as they were often uniquely placed to operate in the interstices of the cultural mix, to translate Arabic language, and to transmit its culture without the clerical or political ambitions that Mozarabic men might bring.²⁴ Other Jews also migrated to Toledo, perhaps most notably the poet Judah Halevi, who moved from Tudela around 1100.²⁵ Strategically sited on the old Roman road that crossed the peninsula, Toledo also continued as an important centre for trade, for

16 Reilly, 1988, 10.

17 Hitchcock, 2008, 75-86; González, 1985, 167-75.

18 Menéndez Pidal, 1947, 27-41.

19 Reilly, 1988, 170-76.

20 Reilly, 1988, 181-82; Harris, 1997, 158-59, 162.

21 Schoenfeld, 2013, esp. 1-13; Caspar, 1923, II, IX, 2, 569-72.

22 Baer, 1961, 50-51.

23 Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, 1987, VI. XXXIII.12.

24 Baer, 1961, 46.

25 Dodds, 2008, 148-49; Cole, 2007, 143-71.

the manufacture of metalwork and punched leather, and for the sale of silk, spices, and slaves.²⁶ The sudden appearance of the city on the 1086 world map of the Burgo de Osma Beatus may signal the impact that this territorial acquisition had on the psyche of the northern kingdoms.²⁷

Papal Legates and their Networks Across the Northern Kingdoms

In France, the papal legate Amat of Oloron had worked closely with Hugh of Die. Amat was one of the great managers of Gregorian reform and worked in the Aquitaine, while his more influential counterpart Hugh of Die took the lead in Burgundy and other central and northern areas. They co-operated with the powerful monastic houses, of which Cluny is the best-known example. In 1077, Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) tried to impose Amat of Oloron and Frotard, abbot of Saint-Pons-de-Thomières, as reforming papal legates in León and Aragón. Both had a successful track record in Catalonia, where they worked with the abbot of Saint-Victor at Marseille.²⁸ Following a precedent set by Ermessenda of Barcelona, in the 1070s and 1080s several of the greatest Catalan monasteries were ceded to either Saint-Pons-de-Thomières or to Saint-Victor of Marseille. Frotard was to find particular favour in Aragón, and he continued to work with Amat of Oloron, even if the latter did not visit in the peninsula again until the mid-1090s. However, neither was acceptable to León. Instead the most influential figure across the peninsula, and especially in León and Castile, may have been cardinal legate Richard of Millau, monk of Saint-Victor of

Marseille. Richard made his first documented appearance as papal legate to Spain in 1078, and retained the role at least until 1081, after which he continued to be involved by invitation until he returned officially in 1101.²⁹ On his way to León he visited the Catalan monastery of Ripoll, and confirmed Raymond Dalmatius as bishop of Roda de Isàvena in Ribagorça. Once he arrived, Richard secured the implementation of the Roman liturgy, often working with Bishop Jimeno of Oca-Burgos, a key figure confirmed in his post by the earlier legate Gerald of Ostia. Gregory VII was delighted with the result and wrote to Alfonso VI as 'glorious king of the Spanish', enclosing a golden rose as a sign of favour. Richard returned to Spain to oversee the council of Burgos in 1080, after attending his inauguration as abbot at Saint-Victor of Marseille.³⁰ The council recognised the appointment of Bernard of La Sauvetat as the new abbot of SS. Facundus and Primitivus of Sahagún. Bernard was a Cluniac, born near Agen and educated at the abbey of Saint-Orens, where Hugh Candidus had supported reform in 1068.³¹ Bernard went from Saint-Orens to be a monk at Cluny, where Abbot Hugh identified his potential as an effective reformer and supported his appointment at Sahagún. Given Bernard's roots near Auch, it is likely that he had a working relationship with Amat of Oloron, as well as developing a close collaboration with Richard of Saint-Victor. From 1086 Bernard was to enhance his position in the network by becoming archbishop-designate of Toledo. After his success in the kingdom of León, Richard was sent, like Hugh Candidus before him, to Toulouse to support the canons

26 Michael, 2008, 279.

27 Sáenz-López, 2010, 332-33.

28 Cowdrey, 1972, 366-67.

29 Reilly, 1988, 103-10, 300-301; Caspar, 1923, II, V, 21, 384-85.

30 Reilly, 1988, 111-112; Walker, 1998b, 35; Fita, 1906, 351-56.

31 Cowdrey, 1970, 98.

of Saint-Sernin who had been ousted by monks from Moissac. Cardinal Richard not only expelled the monks but also excommunicated them, which earned him a reprimand from the pope. His enthusiastic assistance is likely to have led to long-standing gratitude from the canons.³² This set of relationships formed the core of the friendship circle at work in the peninsula and southern France towards the end of the eleventh century.

It is clear from documentary evidence that the papal legates had the opportunity to assist artistic exchange between the different Christian kingdoms of the peninsula, and between them and regions north of the Pyrenees. But it does not disclose the nature of their artistic interests or how they might have attempted to encourage them. For that it is necessary to rely on a range of circumstantial evidence, all in different ways linked to sarcophagi.³³ One of the first pieces of that evidence concerns a journey made by another papal legate. In 1084 Pope Gregory VII sent one of his most distinguished reformers, Abbot Jarento of Saint-Bénigne at Dijon, on a legatine journey that included Coimbra in Portugal. Bernard, as

archbishop of Toledo, was to consecrate a new cathedral at Braga in 1089. A piece of carving that survives from that period may be the first indication of a visual policy amongst this group of reformers. It is a very unusual sarcophagus, carved entirely in low relief (fig. 125).³⁴ On the front a priest, who may be St. Martin of Braga, stands behind a rectangular altar flanked by arches and columns. Nine half-length male figures, presumably his clergy, stand either side of him. On the lid a *clipeus* enclosing a figure of Christ in Majesty is supported by two large flying angels and flanked by processional evangelist figures with beast heads. The whole is a fusion of classical forms, found on pagan and early Christian sarcophagi, with those found in Mozarabic manuscripts. Helmut Schlunk compared this sarcophagus to the Burgo de Osma *Beatus* manuscript of 1086, which was probably written and illuminated at Bernard's abbey of Sahagún. Despite this comparison, Schlunk linked the sarcophagus to Bernard's protégé, Bishop Gerald of Braga (1097-1100, and archbishop 1100-1108).³⁵ As there are also parallels with the earlier *Beatus* of Fernando I (1047), a context closer to 1086 may be more

Figure 125 Dumio (Braga), São Martinho, cast of sarcophagus (Museu Regional de Arqueologia D. Diogo de Sousa)



32 Cowdrey, 1972, 120-21, doc. 50.

33 Walker, 2015a, 77-90.

34 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 67, 138-40.

35 Schlunk, 1968, 424-58.

appropriate.³⁶ If the sarcophagus was produced under the first bishop of the newly restored See, Pedro (1070-1091), as Manuel Castiñeiras has suggested, it could even have been completed in time for Bernard's consecration of the new cathedral. The carving on the sarcophagus is remarkable, but in terms of style and technique it was a dead-end, and only its engagement with ancient sarcophagi ties it to early Romanesque art in the peninsula. As Serafín Moralejo noted, roman sarcophagi permeated early Romanesque.³⁷ Throughout the late eleventh century antique and late antique sarcophagi recur as starting points for diverse artistic experiments throughout this period. Some of these pioneering works took only motifs or techniques from the ancient sarcophagi, whilst a few, like the sarcophagus at Braga, produced modern versions of the form. Yet others engaged with classical style, with early Christian iconography, or used the sarcophagi as stimuli for more complex ideas. The extent of the reliance on them, its geographical range, and the varied results suggest that this was a kind of *art dirigé*, a term more usually applied to c. 1100 art in Rome.³⁸ Whereas Rome had manifold early Christian and later monuments to fuel the art of Gregorian reform, the peninsula had comparatively little early Christian material that had not been subject to later interventions. Pope Gregory VII viewed these periods of Visigothic and Islamic rule with suspicion, and urged the Spanish, 'like good children cut off from their mother', to return to the previous security of the Roman church.³⁹ Sarcophagi were the most visible and widely distributed survivals from the pre-Visigothic era and the

majority had been imported from Rome, so it was fitting for them to provide models. It may have been the papal legates that directed artists towards this vocabulary and who decided to place few limits on their use of it.

New Arrivals at Santiago de Compostela from the North and the South

The cathedral at Santiago de Compostela was the first place to receive funds from Alfonso VI's reclaimed *paria* payments in 1075, although at the end of the eleventh century it was not yet the major pilgrimage attraction it was to become in the twelfth. Building work at Santiago was apparently in train by 1077 when Alfonso VI had to intervene to settle a dispute between the bishop Diego Peláez and the monks of Antealtares. Those monks had previously guarded the site thought to mark the tomb of St. James, and their monastery abutted the new construction. The settlement of the dispute (*Concordia*) says that three chapels were under construction.⁴⁰ The altars of San Salvador, St. John, and St. Peter, previously in the monastery of Antealtares, were to be subsumed into the new cathedral. The bishop was to have sole rights over the chapel of San Salvador, while the monks would retain rights over the chapel of St. Peter that would be connected to the monastery of Antealtares by a new doorway. This phase of the foundation work has two distinguishing features: the square plan of the central eastern chapel of San Salvador, and the two radiating chapels that flank it. Both these innovative aspects may have been the outcome of the negotiations between Alfonso VI and the monastery of Antealtares. From the *Concordia* we can deduce that building work

36 Castiñeiras, 2004, 573-91.

37 Moralejo, 1984, 187-203.

38 Toubert, 1990; Kitzinger, 1972, 87-102; Walker, 2015a, 77-90.

39 Walker, 1998b, 26.

40 Williams, 2008b, 175-91.

had begun on the new cathedral, that some masonry of the monastery of Antealtares had been knocked down, and that the work had not progressed very far. This false start may explain the date of 1078 given for the commencement of the building in the *Codex Calixtinus* and in the *Historia Compostelana*, a date that remains controversial.⁴¹ The irregular rocky site may have imposed additional limitations. John Williams has plausibly proposed that the central chapel was a deliberate quotation of the single square chapel of the earlier church of Alfonso III, an acknowledgement of the past.⁴² The radiating chapels avoid the more obvious hierarchy of the stepped echelon arrangement, found in Cluny II, so they may have been chosen partly as a practical and political solution to the dispute. They are more often seen as integral to the comprehensively foreign nature of this building, for the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela was an aberrant import that lacked architectural roots in the peninsula. From the moment that the first two semi-circular chapels were laid out, this church was to have an ambulatory with radiating chapels, distinguishing it from all previous and contemporary constructions in the peninsula. This differentiation persisted in the plan, in the elevations, and in the building techniques. Since Kenneth Conant's publication, Santiago has been treated as a member of the group of churches that he described as 'pilgrimage churches', a group formed by Sainte-Foy at Conques, Saint-Martial at Limoges, Saint-Sernin at Toulouse, and Saint-Martin at Tours.⁴³ Whilst it is possible to quibble about the coherence of the group and the precise relationship of the other members to Santiago, it is clear that Santiago had much

more in common with them and with other transpyrenean churches than it did with any other construction in the peninsula.⁴⁴

Recent analysis of the fabric and the masons' marks by Jennifer Alexander and Therese Martin, as part of a project run by José Luis Senra, has confirmed that the current chapel of San Salvador is an integral part of the original construction and not reconfigured c. 1200, as sometimes thought.⁴⁵ It is also structurally related to the adjoining chapels of St. Peter and St. John. They also suggest that the fifty masons mentioned in *The Pilgrim's Guide* may have been an accurate assessment of the workforce engaged on that phase of the project.⁴⁶ It is often assumed that all the masons and sculptors who worked on Santiago must have come with the foreign architects, but some of them may instead have been captives from al-Andalus, or in some other sense unfree. According to a triumphalist passage in the twelfth-century *Historia Compostelana*, Saracen captives were employed to carry stones and other things for the construction of the church.⁴⁷ More importantly, the choice of subject matter and the techniques employed argue in favour of an Andalusí formation for the sculptors. The semi-circular chapels of the ambulatory received sculpted capitals whose motifs would have been familiar to the clergy from Andalusí textiles that had hung in churches for many decades, covering the walls, veiling the sanctuary, and above all providing altar cloths and vestments. Lined in this fashion, churches would have projected the interiors of the reliquaries that they prized so greatly and which constituted their direct connection to heaven. Stonework painted to imitate textiles would have been a

41 *Historia Compostellana*, 1988, 121; Moralejo, 1992, 210-11; Castiñeiras, 2010b, 32-41.

42 Williams, 2010a, 110-121.

43 Fernie, 2014, 135-38.

44 Gerson, 2006, 599-618; Fernie, 2014, 134-38.

45 Alexander, 2014, 150.

46 Alexander, 2014, 146.

47 *Historia Compostellana*, 1988, I, ciii, 174-76.

logical development. These designs may also have been chosen because they were familiar to the sculptors, as the quadrupeds, birds, and foliage can all be found in eleventh-century Andalusí ivory or marble carving, notably on the caskets carved for the rulers of the taifa of Toledo. As Alfonso VI knew the city of Toledo from his months of exile, it is entirely logical to envisage him loaning newly acquired craftsmen to the project at Santiago.

The stone carving is varied and experimental. Some of the capitals remain very close to the block, particularly one that depicts two angular griffins, with wattles under their bird heads (fig. 126). Their bodies turn sharply to meet over a small chalice in the centre of the capital forming an unusual version of an ancient motif, one that also appears in miniature on the Pamplona ivory casket of 1004-1005. A second griffin capital in the chapel of San Salvador shows the sculptor feeling his way into the new form and exploring its components, as one of the wings of this griffin metamorphoses into a volute.⁴⁸ Griffins feature again on one of the very few surviving capitals from the cathedral of Braga (c. 1089).⁴⁹ Another image that appears both at Braga and Santiago is a man blowing an oliphant, perhaps in each case marking the agreement to found the new church. Lions also feature strongly in the group of early capitals at Santiago. In style and pose they have more in common with the lions on marble basins carved for the 'Āmirids than the more classical examples found on late antique sarcophagi (fig. 127). The most innovative decoration in the chapel of San Salvador is a carving of a cloaked male figure clasping two large birds by their necks. The design was probably inspired by an

48 See Anderson, 2013, 79, fig. 49 for an illustration of a marble basin from Córdoba with similar confronted griffins.

49 Castiñeiras, 2004, 583, 591 and fig. 11.

Figure 126 Santiago de Compostela Cathedral, Chapel of San Salvador, capital



Islamic textile, but the male figure is sculpted in doll-like form, with drilled eyes, that was to be used at Conques into the twelfth century.⁵⁰ Close attention was paid to the birds' feathers, with a sharp distinction between the curved wing feathers and striated tail feathers. The birds' heads occupy the place of the volutes, and the man's head, that of the fleuron; on the side a cross-hatched pinecone fills that position. Two capitals located at the entrance to the San Salvador chapel use a similar style to depict Alfonso VI and Diego Peláez in apotheosis. They appear to confirm that the chapel, including its sculptural decoration, was complete by

50 For a textile, albeit of the twelfth century, see *AAAIIS*, 1992, no. 88, 320; Nodar, 2000, 617-48.

Figure 127 Santiago de Compostela Cathedral, ambulatory capital

1088 at the latest, when Peláez was deposed, whilst other scholars argue that these capitals are commemorative and belong around 1100. One difficulty with the later date is that Bishop Diego Gelmírez, although once a protégé of Peláez, made no other efforts to preserve his good memory and indeed inclined towards erasing it (*damnatio memoriae*). Their shared name, 'Didacus', perhaps enabled Gelmírez to see himself in the inscription as much as Peláez. If any doubt remains that these sculptors were trained in an Andalusí tradition and adapted it to the granite of the northwest, a further unusual feature may dispel it. Santiago may be the first church to display the distinctive and strange striated excrescences known as *pitons-d'angle*.⁵¹ Both Marcel Durliat and Thomas Lyman saw

this device as distinctively 'Spanish'.⁵² The most plausible origin is the fashion for marble capitals with prominent striated leaf lobes in the taifa kingdoms. Especially robust examples come from Toledo, although other more delicate versions were carved in Zaragoza during the mid-eleventh century (fig. 128).⁵³

Manuel Castiñeiras and Victoriano Nodar have recently emphasised links between Sainte-Foy at Conques in the Auvergne and the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela.⁵⁴ Nodar has suggested that a mason named Bernard, mentioned in *The Pilgrim's Guide* as one of the

⁵² Lyman, 1969, 37; Watson, 1978, 300; examples of *pitons* across the Pyrenees include Saint-Gaudens, Morlaas, Simacourbe, Saint-Mont, Croûte, Saint-Pré-de-Générès, and Diusse.

⁵³ Walker, 2015b, 259-75.

⁵⁴ Castiñeiras, 2010b, 35-47.

⁵¹ Gaillard, 1938a, 124-26.

Figure 128 Toledo (Museo de Santa Cruz, Toledo), capital



first masons working on the cathedral, could be the same Bernard recorded on a capital in the transept at Conques as *BERNARDUS ME FECIT* ('Bernard made me').⁵⁵ Although Abbot Odolric (1030-1065) may have planned a new church at Conques, the execution probably began under Abbot Stephen (1065-1087), with additional work by Abbot Bego (1087-1107). Both Santiago and Conques have a noticeable modification between the ambulatory and the rest of the church; at Santiago it is an increase in ambition at the gallery level, whereas at Conques it is a change of building technique, as the ambulatory is built of rubble with a sandstone ashlar dressing, but the rest of the building is of limestone ashlar.⁵⁶ Although Conques was a Benedictine abbey and Santiago a cathedral, both were remote, had to negotiate an uneven rocky site, and were working to attract the majority of their income from pilgrimage, all characteristics that made them natural collaborators in the supraregional pilgrimage

enterprise. Indeed, the two surviving texts that have come to dominate our view of medieval pilgrimage – *The Book of Sainte-Foy* and *The Pilgrim's Guide* – concern Conques and Compostela respectively.⁵⁷ A comparison between two capitals helps to confirm a sculptural connection at this early date. One in the ambulatory at Conques features two centaurs whose heads replace volutes and, in place of a console, a mermaid with a double tail. On the second, in the ambulatory at Santiago, close to the chapel of San Salvador, two double-tailed mermaids replace volutes. The capitals share an approach to structure, to classical subject matter, and to detailing. Yet these capitals are about a thousand miles apart, so their similarity is significant, and requires an explanation. Traditionally the answer might have been 'the pilgrimage route', but that is not sufficient. The arrival of Peter of Rodez, Frotard's protégé, as bishop of Pamplona in 1082-1083 has been proposed as the link, and he was certainly a member of the group that forged the connections. Conques was in the diocese of Rodez, Peter's birthplace, and he had been a monk at Conques before moving to Saint-Pons-de-Thomières. He was to become an influential member of the friendship circle c. 1100. The diocese of Rodez had been resistant to reform under Bishop Pierre Bérenger de Narbonne (1053-c. 1079), also an ex-monk of Conques, but his successor Pons Etienne was a reformer, who gave a priory to Saint-Victor at Marseilles in 1082, and was thus a minor member of the friendship network. For more than a decade Sainte-Foy at Conques had been locked in a dispute with the neighbouring Cluniac monastery of Figeac and

⁵⁵ Castiñeiras, 2010b, 34-35; Nodar, 2004; see also Moralejo, 1983, 221-36.

⁵⁶ Fernie, 2014, 120.

⁵⁷ *Book of Sainte Foy*, 1995, 21-28; Sheingorn accepts the manuscript's claim to be written by a Bernard of Angers in the early eleventh century, although the earliest surviving manuscript is c. 1100; Shaver-Crandell, 1995, 24-31.

did not become officially independent from Figeac until 1097 at the council of Nîmes.⁵⁸ It is thus possible that the initial artistic exchange between Conques and Santiago took place through a Cluniac network and perhaps in concert with Richard of Saint-Victor of Marseilles. The artistic relationship was to flourish and develop into a long-lasting dialogue, as the friendship network had the ideal set of contacts to link Conques and Santiago de Compostela and to facilitate the movement of craftsmen between sites and even between kingdoms.

San Isidoro de León, the Infanta Urraca, and the Network

The other building that provides useful evidence for the early years of Romanesque art in Spain is the galilee-narthex of San Isidoro in León. The epitaph of the infanta Urraca, daughter of Fernando I and sister of Alfonso VI, says that she enlarged the church of San Isidoro and endowed it with many gifts. This brief statement has given rise to decades of disagreement about what 'amplifying the church' meant, but it probably included the addition of a vaulted galilee porch, commonly known as the Pantheon, to the west front of the old church. The plan of the galilee porch recalls that of Cluny II, and just as the space at Cluny had been used for the funerary liturgy, so it is likely that the building at San Isidoro focused on the liturgical memory of Fernando I under the supervision of Urraca.⁵⁹ The Pantheon has been dated on stylistic and documentary evidence to the 1080s, and probably post-1085.⁶⁰

One practice that indicates such an early date is the lack of mason's marks, which are likewise missing from the first three radiating chapels completed at Santiago de Compostela.⁶¹ Urraca may have been assisted by direct contact with Cluny, but it is even more likely that she worked with Bernard of La Sauvetat, the abbot of Sahagún from 1080, who would have been familiar with the abbey church at Cluny and its liturgical functions. Whilst the concept of the space and the plan can be seen as reformist and Cluniac, the articulation of the space looks to other Burgundian buildings such as the narthex (*avant-nef*) of Saint-Philibert at Tournus.⁶² Urraca obtained the stone from the quarry of San Adriano de Boñar, a monastery that was part of the considerable portfolio of property (*infantado*) attached to her position as *domina* of San Isidoro.⁶³ The ashlar masonry, nook shafts, roll moulding, historiated capitals, and groin vaults all mark the Pantheon as a Romanesque building. The vaults are supported in the centre by two short sturdy columns topped by substantial capitals, often considered the earliest Romanesque capitals in Spain. Their size associates these two Corinthian capitals with the finest tenth-century Mozarabic examples, but they are more classical in their use of ball and pinecone decoration (fig. 129). The other thirty capitals all surmount half-shafts set against piers or walls.⁶⁴ At first glance the five historiated capitals seem to lack any overall theme, but they may relate to the intercessory function of this space. The Sacrifice of Abraham is an antitype of the Resurrection, and others may have a thaumaturgic role to protect the soul of the

58 Werckmeister, 1988, 108.

59 Krüger, 2003, 139-59; see also Williams, 2011b, 93-116; Walker, 2000, 200-225.

60 Senra, 1997, 122-144; for another view see Seehausen, 2009b, 1-37.

61 Martin, 2005, 382; Moralejo, 1995b, 127-42; Alexander, 2014, 143-65.

62 Senra, 2011b, 267-81; Senra, 1997, 128-130.

63 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 122, 257.

64 Robb, 1945, 165-74; Martín, 2007, 106-43.

Figure 129 León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, Pantheon, capital



deceased from demonic attack.⁶⁵ The impostes are especially notable for the consistent high quality of their foliate decoration. Within the peninsula the only sculptural tradition capable of producing such fine work was Andalusi. The depth of carving, leaf forms, and other details, including occasional drilled circles, suggest that the sculptors of the capitals at San Isidoro may have been trained in a taifa kingdom. It may be significant that the vegetal carving on the capitals at San Isidoro is deep, precise, and confident, whereas the figurative work seems more experimental. This implies that the formation of these sculptors was based on foliate and geometric work, exactly the decoration required by taifa patrons. The sculptors of the

⁶⁵ Walker, 2000, 204-206.

Figure 130 León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, Pantheon, capital, Sacrifice of Abraham



Pantheon were probably trained in Toledo, and Urraca may have acquired them through her brother, Alfonso VI. This premise is reinforced by a stylistic and iconographic comparison between a hunting scene on a capital at San Isidoro and hunters carved on ivories made for the taifa rulers of Toledo.⁶⁶

A specific sarcophagus may have been important in the development of the sculptural style at San Isidoro. John Williams noted an unusual iconographic element in the capital depicting the Sacrifice of Abraham: the presence of three additional figures not explained by the biblical story (fig. 130).⁶⁷ He attributed

⁶⁶ Walker, 2015b, 269-71.

⁶⁷ Williams, 1984, 25-28; for the sarcophagus, see Cazes, 2008b, 330-331.

Figure 131 Saint-Orens sarcophagus (Musée Saint-Raymond, Musée des Antiques de Toulouse)



them to a misreading of an early Christian sarcophagus, now in the Musée Saint-Raymond at Toulouse (fig. 131). In the eleventh century it was at the priory of Saint-Orens in Auch, where Bernard, abbot of Sahagún, had been educated. It is entirely plausible that, faced with a request for advice on art, Bernard would have turned to what he knew and been guided by the preoccupations of the small group of reformers to which he belonged. Sahagún certainly looked to southwestern France for textual and visual models for liturgical manuscripts.⁶⁸ Whether Bernard conveyed his knowledge by oral description, rough sketches, or despatched artists to see for themselves, we cannot be sure, but the last seems most likely. There are considerable differences between the fourth-century carving on the Saint-Orens sarcophagus and the late-eleventh-century capitals in the Pantheon at San Isidoro, but also more shared features than the one iconographic element that Williams identified. The depiction of Daniel in the Lions' Den on the sarcophagus may have inspired another capital at San Isidoro, as both have thickset lions with similar angular heads and bodies (fig. 132 and fig. 133). Williams dismissed any stylistic link between the Saint-Orens sarcophagus and the capitals

of San Isidoro, even though both sets of Daniel carvings, the capital and the sarcophagus, have similar weight. In comparison with other more classical sarcophagi, the figures from Saint-Orens are thicker-set, their facial features formulaic with full round cheeks, bulbous eyes, and cap-like hair that is sometimes striated. The nude bodies of Adam and Eve and of Isaac are heavy, and the drapery on the other figures is not very clearly delineated, except for the swag of fabric that hangs around the neck of a woman in prayer. These are all features found either on the Pantheon capitals or on almost contemporary works. Furthermore, the early Christian sarcophagus has a row of male disembodied busts behind the main scene of the Sacrifice of Abraham. This tiered effect is reflected on a capital at San Isidoro, where Moses is bringing his people out of Babylon; the bust of a bearded male figure rises from the torus, carrying a boy on his shoulders. The emphatic cap-like hair-styles of the Saint-Orens figures, male and female, were not copied at San Isidoro, but found imitators elsewhere.

Elements of the sculptural decoration at San Isidoro developed within this royal and Cluniac ambit and beyond. One example is San Salvador de Nogal de las Huertas, which lies north of Carrión de los Condes. Around 1060, Countess Elvira Sánchez, widow of Fernando Díaz, had chosen a pleasant site by the river Carrión for

68 AMS, cat. no. 148, 294-95; Walker, 1998b, 141-42, 192-96.

Figure 132 Saint-Orens sarcophagus, Daniel in the Lions' Den (Musée Saint-Raymond, Musée des Antiques de Toulouse)



this small monastery. Most of the buildings are ruined, but enough survive to show that the church remained a simple structure with a single nave and apse. It became part of the royal patrimony, and on the death of Queen Constance in 1093 was given to the Cluniac house of Sahagún. Around the same time two capitals were carved to flank the sanctuary arch, one with ecclesiastical figures and the second with an overall rinceaux design. On the figurative capital three male clerics stand centrally below each of the three fleurons in a manner reminiscent of Daniel at San Isidoro. One of them grips the volute to his left, playfully interacting with the architectural structure of

his capital. Similar capitals are found at Saint-Sernin at Toulouse, in particular one where a male figure clasps a volute. The rinceaux capital on the north side of the sanctuary also features two prominent *pitons d'angle* (fig. 134). Both capitals have fine impostes: on the south side, horizontal palmettes similar to those found at San Isidoro and, on the north side, a scroll of rosettes. The rinceaux design was traced by Gaillard from Zaragoza to Aragón, Toulouse, and Moissac, but its very ubiquity is problematic.⁶⁹ As this classical motif can be

69 Gaillard, 1938a, 124-26; 138-39; Domínguez Perela, 1985, 61-85; Mann, 2009, 148; Kothe, 2009, 85-96.

Figure 133 León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, Pantheon, capital, lion hunt



Figure 134 San Salvador de Nogal de las Huertas (Palencia), chancel arch, capital



found earlier in such disparate locations, for example on fifth-century Aquitanian sarcophagi or in the Asturian church of San Salvador de Valdédios, it is of limited use in the analysis of early Romanesque.

The similarities between carving at San Isidoro and that at Saint-Sernin in Toulouse, outside the peninsula, are well known and were crucial to the theory of 'pilgrimage road art'. The artistic conversation is not in doubt, but its mechanisms are less well understood. This connection may be explained by Richard of Saint-Victor's close relationship with both parties, the canons of Saint-Sernin and the royal family of León, as he could have brokered an exchange of craftsmen between the two in the 1080s. It may also be significant that Richard

came from Millau, a region strategically placed between Rodez (Rouergue) and Saint-Pons-de-Thomières, and between Toulouse and Provence. With his additional connections to Cluny and Conques in the north and to Catalonia in the south, Richard had wide-ranging authority. His sphere of influence also overlapped substantially with the places that commissioned marble altar slabs in the middle of the eleventh century, objects produced, in my opinion, by Andalusí sculptors. Although that sculptural tradition may have died out by c. 1070, Richard would have grown up with an awareness of these exceptional works, and perhaps of the methods used to redeploy the skills of the craftsmen.

Husillos: An Artistic Conversation

In 1088 Cardinal Richard of Saint-Victor at Marseilles and Peter, archbishop of Aix-en-Provence, were invited to attend a great council at Husillos, eight kilometres north of Palencia, convened by King Alfonso VI.⁷⁰ The council had some difficult business to debate, including a boundary dispute between Burgos and Osma, as well as Alfonso VI's proposed deposition of Diego Peláez of Iria-Compostela, who was accused of treason. One of the most prominent aspects of the council is its unusual location, as Husillos was a relatively minor monastery, off the main road across the Pyrenees, and the council could have been held more conveniently at Burgos, or Carrión de los Condes, at Sahagún, or even at León itself. If Alfonso VI had wanted to promote the route that we know as the pilgrimage road, any of those sites would have made more sense. One detail may explain this choice of site, for the monastery of Santa María at Husillos was closely connected to the counts of Monzón, the family of Pedro Ansúrez, the king's closest friend.⁷¹ Indeed, his tenth-century ancestor, Fernando Ansúrez, may have been buried in the church, in a remarkable Roman sarcophagus.⁷² The exceptional quality of the Husillos sarcophagus may have been sufficient to attract the attention of the king, Richard of Saint-Victor of Marseilles, and the archbishop of Aix. A venue with such an impressive and intriguing work of art would have had the capacity to leaven the more serious dealings of the council. If all parties brought craftsmen with them to inspect and record the sarcophagus, they may also have envisaged some tangible creative outcomes. Alfonso VI was certainly capable of using strategies to manage the

meeting, as he opened the council by ceding to the pope the monastery of San Servando, across the river Tagus from the main citadel of Toledo. It was to be administered by Cardinal Richard in his capacity as abbot of Saint-Victor at Marseilles, and he was to convey an annual tribute in gold to the papacy.⁷³ The council agreed to the replacement of Bishop Diego Peláez, although he found papal support and shelter for several years in the kingdom of Aragón.⁷⁴

The best route to Husillos for Cardinal Richard's party would have been along the main road from Burgos to San Martín de Frómista, the site of the monastery founded by Munia-donna, Alfonso VI's grandmother. Here the visitors would presumably have met the court of Alfonso VI and, after formalities, turned south towards Palencia. It is not known whether a new church at Frómista was already underway at this point, and it might even have been planned during this assembly. What is clear, as Serafín Moralejo pointed out, is that one of the finest capitals carved for Frómista responds explicitly to the Husillos sarcophagus.⁷⁵ Unlike the Saint-Orens sarcophagus, the Husillos tomb did not represent late antique Christianity, but was theatrically pagan in its rich and expressive classical style and its graphic depiction of the death of Clytemnestra (fig. 17). Even so it is possible to see how the arrest and judgment of Orestes, shown on one end of the sarcophagus, could have been viewed through a Christian lens.⁷⁶ The pagan piece is a much finer work of art than the Saint-Orens Christian sarcophagus. It is more dynamic, and the figures have finely carved features that vividly express their emotions, which can also be seen in the powerful movement of their limbs. Amongst

70 Reilly, 1988, 198-208.

71 Reilly, 2008, 109-26.

72 Marcos Díez, 2009, 47-48, n. 74 and 75.

73 Reilly, 1988, 198-200.

74 Reilly, 1988, 218.

75 Moralejo, 1993, 210-11; Moralejo, 1979, 85-87.

76 Prado-Vilar, 2011, 83-118.

all the surviving Roman sarcophagi imported into the peninsula, this sarcophagus remains exceptional for the quality and vibrancy of its carving. For these reasons it is capable of sustaining Serafín Moralejo's argument that it was a seminal object in the development of Romanesque carving in Castile and León, and by extension in Aragón and Toulouse.⁷⁷ His proposition maintained that a new approach to stone-carving sprang from consideration of that sarcophagus in 1088 and soon found its expression in a capital at Frómista, at León, and thence to more capitals at Jaca, and back to Santiago de Compostela.

The presence of Cardinal Richard, abbot of Saint-Victor at Marseilles, and of Bernard, archbishop of Toledo, at this council would have provided an important opportunity for discussion of reformist art and architecture. Perhaps it was significant that Raymond Dalmatius, bishop of Roda de Isàvena, was also in the party. The visitors travelled home by a cross-country route, via the Castilian monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos, where they consecrated three new altars. Much debate has centred on the nature of this consecration and the difficulties in matching surviving archaeological evidence to a new Romanesque building at this date. It has been proposed that this ceremony was to consecrate a new church in the old Mozarabic style, now usually referred to as the lower church at Silos, but it may have involved only the deposition of new relics and no major rebuilding.⁷⁸ The idea that a new church would have been built in the old Mozarabic style as late as 1088 is difficult to countenance, given the clear Romanesque statements elsewhere. The idea that such a building would have received the imprimatur of Cardinal Richard and his entourage is even more problematic.

His attendance at a ceremony whose purpose was to reorient the liturgical life of the monastery in a way that was in sympathy with the reforming spirit of Santo Domingo is, however, entirely plausible. There was no rush to replace all Mozarabic churches, – that at Sahagún may have also remained in use – and even re-consecrated mosques continued to be acceptable liturgical spaces into the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.⁷⁹ The main altar at Silos preserved the previous dedication to St. Sebastian, the Virgin, and St. Martin, whom Domingo had particularly admired and emulated. The others revived a dedication to St. Peter, which Domingo had discontinued, and added dedications to St. Benedict, St. Nicholas, and to St. Domingo himself, only recently translated to the church in 1076.⁸⁰ The consecration party was also called to witness one of Domingo's most important miracles, as a captive, called Servandus, interrupted their ceremony. Bringing his chains, Servandus claimed that Domingo had appeared to him in a vision and released him from his prison in Muslim Medinaceli. With one leap Domingo had joined other saintly liberators, including St. Martin of Tours and St. Foy of Conques. Ransom payments had long been a means of exchange in the peninsula, but now the process was conducted within a spiritual framework. The arrival of Servandus drew the focus of the visit back to the tomb of St. Domingo and its miraculous powers; the setting at Silos was just as theatrical as that at Husillos. As they were nearby, it is likely that Richard of Saint-Victor's party also visited San Pedro de Arlanza and saw the antique sarcophagus used for the burial of Fernán González in the late tenth century.

77 Moralejo, 1984, 187–203; Moralejo, 1973a, 427–34.

78 Senra, 2010, 141–67; Senra, 2009, 195–225.

79 Henriët, 2000a, 71, n.73; Senra, 2011b, 243–93; for repurposing, see Harris, 1997, 158–72; Reilly, 1988, 182–83, 191.

80 Walker, 1998b, 76–80; Lappin, 2002, 87–89.

Another reused sarcophagus from Villanueva de Lorenzana, between Mondoñedo and Foz (Galicia) and too far northwest for this visit, acquired a legend that may be relevant to the way these sarcophagi were viewed. It was an Aquitanian sarcophagus, associated with the burial of another tenth-century count, Osorio Gutiérrez. The legend said that the count bought it in the Holy Land, where some 'infidels' had carved it for 'a Moorish King', and that it came to Galicia miraculously by sea. Not only does this story suggest that the sarcophagus was purchased and brought by sea, albeit from Aquitaine, but also it recognises that the craftsmen who could produce such sculpture were 'Moorish'.⁸¹

The capital that Moralejo identified as a lynchpin of Romanesque in Spain was found at San Martín de Frómista (fig. 135). The present monument was so badly restored in the early twentieth century that it is difficult to gain a clear idea of its medieval state, but by that time the capital was located in the central apse. José Luis Senra has recently asserted that as an entity Frómista may belong to the second decade of the twelfth century and not to the late eleventh.⁸² That does not preclude building work c. 1090, as a galilee porch could have been added to the original church.⁸³ The capital is now in the Museo Arqueológico Provincial in Palencia and replaced by a copy *in situ*. The subject may be Cain's murder of Abel, as Francisco Prado-Vilar has argued.⁸⁴ The most obvious links with the Husillos sarcophagus are a central scene of murder with avengers that pursue the murderer. The capital was damaged at the time

Figure 135 Frómista, San Martín, capital, two nude fighters, Cain and Abel (?) (Museo Arqueológico Provincial, Palencia)



of restoration, but an earlier photograph shows two male figures with splayed legs, one wielding a weapon and the other raising his arm in a defensive gesture. To either side are figures of retribution, not the draped female Furies of the sarcophagus, but naked male figures rising over heavy swags of drapery and threatening the murderer with serpents. As Serafín Moralejo identified so clearly, the sculptor of the capital imitated the drapery swag that floats across the Furies on the sarcophagus, as well as their flowing hair. The depiction of the killer and his victim on the capital is also clearly inspired by the striking figures of Orestes and Pylades. Neither the subject matter nor the style was copied comprehensively from the Husillos sarcophagus, but the sculptor absorbed both and identified certain elements to use and others to set aside. To adapt the scene to the capital form, the sculptor added volutes and two small *pitons d'angles*. Underneath the right-hand *piton*, a heavy swag of drapery issues from a small head, distinct from the masks that more

81 Moráis Morán, 2013, 303-306.

82 Senra, 2012, 376-412; Senra, 2011a, 335-66; Senra, 2011b, 243-93.

83 Mann, 2009, 86-87; Pérez Celada, 1986, 12; Senra, 2011a, 345-50.

84 Prado-Vilar, 2008, 173-99.

Figure 136 Frómista, San Martín, capital,
lion riders (Museo Arqueológico
Provincial, Palencia)



often fulfil this function in manuscripts and on Leonese ivories. The male avenger closest to the murderer seems to rise directly from the torus of the capital, an unusual feature also found on the Moses capital at San Isidoro. Somewhat oddly, this Husillos carving has almost no legacy at San Martín de Frómista.

Serafín Moralejo believed that the same master carved a second exceptional capital at Frómista (fig. 136).⁸⁵ This is not immediately apparent as the form of the capital is markedly different, but Moralejo noted the facial detailing which is clearly derived from the Husillos sarcophagus. This capital has three main elements: three types of foliate volutes, striated, curled, and flowing; two matching classicised youths with refined features; and two well-modelled lions, one male and one female, ridden by the youths. A thin stream of drapery coming from another lion mask appears to anchor the boys, who otherwise

seem about to spring from the stone block. The full use of the volume of the capital, the dynamism of the figures, and the detailing are all remarkable for early Romanesque sculpture. The lions are much more plastic than those on Andalusí marble basins and almost certainly derive directly from a classical source, perhaps from a sarcophagus in Provence. The different volutes suggest that this capital may have been a showpiece, either to demonstrate what the sculptor could do or to instruct apprentice sculptors. The same sculptor may have made another isolated capital, recut to fit a space on the north transept portal at San Isidoro de León. It has comparable moulded bodies in bent poses, similar gripping hands, and braided hair.⁸⁶ The turn of a lion's head, entwining serpents that emerge from a small lion mask, and the trademark *pitons d'angle* under striated volutes, complete the list of shared features. Perhaps it was carved for the original east end of Urraca's church, which was begun in her lifetime. As Francisco Prado-Vilar has shown, the Orestes sarcophagus at Husillos may have had particular resonance for Alfonso VI and his sister Urraca, and their underlying need for absolution.⁸⁷ Pedro Ansúrez and Urraca were both suspected of being involved in the violent death of their brother, Sancho II, as part of a plot to restore Alfonso to the throne of León. It would not be illogical if they decided to commission capitals based on the classical scene but re-invented as Christian penance. Alfonso VI's capital could have stayed nearby in Frómista, his grandmother's place of burial, whilst Urraca's was used at San Isidoro, the church that she oversaw. The style inspired by the Husillos sarcophagus has acquired the epithet *jaqués*, as more examples of it are found

85 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 90, 210-11.

86 For an illustration, see Martin, 2006, figs.73a and 73b; Martin, 2008, 363, n. 14.

87 Prado-Vilar, 2008, 189; Prado-Vilar, 2011, 99-104.

Figure 137 Sahagún, SS. Facundus and Primitivus, marble tomb lid of Alfonso Ansúrez (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid)



in the cathedral at Jaca than at Frómista, but it is better defined only as ‘the Husillos style’ to avoid assumptions about the location and adherence of master carvers, as its use at Jaca is not sufficiently prevalent to justify its attribution to that site. Likewise, ‘Saint-Orens style’ is a preferable descriptor for the heavier full-faced style inspired by that sarcophagus, also found in Jaca.

Another innovative landmark in the invention of Romanesque in the peninsula, a marble tomb lid (fig. 137), survived at the Cluniac monastery of Sahagún.⁸⁸ Like the example at Braga, it represented a new kind of contemporary sarcophagus. An inscription runs along a central ridge that divides the two sloping surfaces of the lid and names the

deceased as the dear son (*carus filius*) of Count Pedro Ansúrez and Countess Eilo, that is, the young son of Alfonso VI’s childhood friend. Debra Hassig has demonstrated that the ideology of this piece is explicitly Cluniac.⁸⁹ It shows psychopomp archangels assisting the soul as it is welcomed into heaven (*receptio in caelum*), supported by the life and death of Christ as witnessed by the Evangelists, and the mass of the dead. Bernard of Toledo may have assisted in this expression of the liturgy of the dead. A portrait of the dead-but-alive Alfonso Ansúrez is particularly expressive and evocative, and surely carved by a master. The long streaming hair of the deceased, with a centre parting, and the drilling either side of the eyes shows an awareness of Roman sculpture. His

⁸⁸ Moralejo, 1985, 63–100.

⁸⁹ Hassig, 1991, 140–53.

larger-than-life hands reach out confidently to the Hand of God (*dextera domini*) that draws him into heaven, a gesture reminiscent of the angel on the ivory cross at San Isidoro. The sculptor has given real weight to the body that is nonetheless floating upwards. Parallel lines of drapery cling to his lower legs and his bare penitent feet hang one step away from their goal. But it is his features that are most compelling to the extent that they seem almost drawn from life. The ivory Carrizo Christ from León shares some of these features: striated hair with a centre parting, expressive hands that are too large for the body, prominent eyes, and jewelled borders on the clothing. Other details suggest that the sculptor of this tomb had been exposed to a wide range of material and different media. Like the shrine of St. Isidore and the chalice of Urraca, the sarcophagus lid looks to Ottonian Germany for the form of its trapezoidal lid, which resembles the tomb lid of Bishop Bernard of Hildesheim (d. 1022).⁹⁰ That gabled tomb lid depicts the nine choirs of angels as nine busts of winged angels disposed on each side of the lid, an arrangement that could have inspired the design at Sahagún. The tight striated cuffs on some of the figures recall details used by goldsmiths on the shrine of San Isidoro and the *arca santa*, and the use of drilling to punctuate the epigraphy also suggests familiarity with the practices of metalworkers. Another key to the formation of this master may be the way that he carved the hair of the figure of the Archangel Gabriel. This figure flies forward wielding a censer and has small pierced circles along his hairline, a feature that can be seen in very different circumstances on ivories and marble panels from al-Andalus.⁹¹ In short, this sculptor brings together elements previously found on sumptuary works but realises them

in marble. This may suggest that some sculptors were able to work across diverse media and on very different scales or that liturgical furniture provided models for stone carvers. This facility with marble links this sculptor with the re-working of marble sarcophagi in and around Toulouse c. 1096. The figures of the archangels have drilled eyes, and prominent drilling between their toes, a technique used on some Roman sarcophagi.⁹² For all his Leonese references, it is possible that this master craftsman also worked in Toulouse, perhaps mediated through the friendship circle and Richard of Saint-Victor of Marseille in particular. The number of masons and sculptors who could work at this level may have been quite small before the twelfth century. The legal status of such craftsmen remains uncertain, but, as I have maintained elsewhere, they are likely to have been bound to rich and powerful laymen or churchmen.⁹³

Widening the Network: Sancho Ramírez of Aragón, Queen Felicia, and the New Town of Jaca

This consideration of early Romanesque architecture and sculpture has so far focused on the kingdom of León, Galicia, and Castile and on a fairly small group of monuments within that kingdom at Braga, Santiago de Compostela, Sahagún, San Isidoro de León, and on a related group in Pedro Ansúrez's county of Saldaña. On the other side of the peninsula, architectural and sculptural innovation proceeded somewhat differently. Like Alfonso VI, Sancho Ramírez of Aragón and Navarre had marital links to the

90 Moralejo, 1985, 65-66.

91 AMS, 1993, cat. no. 35, 90-91.

92 For example, the Roman sarcophagus reused for the burial of Constance of Aragón, wife of Frederick I, King of Sicily, in Palermo Cathedral.

93 Walker, 2015b, 259-75.

aristocracy of France. Sancho Ramírez's queen, Felicia of Roucy, was even more closely connected to the kings of France and Sicily than Alfonso VI's queen, Constance of Burgundy. Yet there is little suggestion that this had any direct effect on artistic production. Felicia's role may have had more to do with securing potential access to the wealth of the taifa kingdoms of Zaragoza and Lleida for her family in Roucy. Although we lack chronicle and documentary evidence for the details, relations between Sancho Ramírez and the taifa kingdoms seem to have been scarcely less tangled than those of Alfonso VI. Sancho had enjoyed a share of the *vetus paria* since he acquired Navarre in 1076, and that income had enabled him to turn Jaca into a significant town, its success founded on commerce and its position at the foot of the Somport Pass.⁹⁴ It had a mixed population with a core of Aragonese who owned and worked the surrounding land, supplemented by resident immigrants from north of the Pyrenees and Jewish merchants as well as transient travelers, pilgrims, and itinerant merchants.⁹⁵ In the early 1080s, the death of al-Muqtadir, ruler of the taifa kingdom of Zaragoza, precipitated a battle over the succession between two brothers, not unlike the one fought in León some ten years earlier. Al-Mu'taman held Zaragoza and the territory around it, whilst al-Mundhir seized Lleida and Tortosa. Sancho Ramírez and Berenguer Ramon II of Barcelona allied themselves with al-Mundhir, but al-Mu'taman had purchased the military skills of Rodrigo Díaz, known as El Cid. According to the admittedly biased literary sources, the allies were roundly defeated; even so al-Mundhir continued to hold Lleida and Tortosa, thus splitting the old taifa kingdom.⁹⁶ In the ensuing battle of Morella,

Rodrigo Díaz took one of the most impressive groups of prisoners recorded, including Raymond Dalmatius, bishop of Roda de Isàvena, Count Sancho Sánchez of Pamplona, and Blasco Garcés, the king of Aragón's mayordomo, all exchanged for a substantial ransom.⁹⁷ King Sancho Ramírez may have been involved in the southern taifas of Almería and Murcia around the same time, but the tradition that told how the relics of St. Indaletius came from there to the monastery of San Juan de la Peña in 1084 is probably an invention of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. The translation is more likely to have taken place c. 1125 under Alfonso I of Aragón.⁹⁸ Although Sancho Ramírez took the fortress of Monzón in 1089, the greater conquests of Huesca (1096), Barbastro (1101), and eventually Zaragoza (1118) also had to await his sons' military talents.⁹⁹ In the early 1090s, Aragón remained part of an unstable region: on the death of al-Mundhir of Lleida in 1090, Berenguer Ramon II of Barcelona and al-Musta'in II of Zaragoza tried to hold back El Cid who moved to take over the role of 'protector'. El Cid's superior military skills prevailed again, and the count of Barcelona was captured and had to surrender all the *parias* from the eastern taifa kingdoms except Zaragoza itself to regain his freedom.¹⁰⁰ In 1092 it was El Cid who controlled the peace negotiation between himself, Aragón, and Zaragoza.

In the midst of the manifold threats, Sancho Ramírez put his kingdom under the protection of the pope in 1089 and agreed to pay 500 mancuses per annum to Rome. This was not a sudden move, as Sancho had long relied on support

94 Nelson, 1978, 700.

95 Ubieto Arteta, 1983, 7-22.

96 Reilly, 1988, 164; Barton, 2000, 105-112.

97 Reilly, 1988, 168-69; Barton, 2000, 111; Fletcher, 1989, 138-39.

98 Pérez-Embid, 2002, 49-55; Laliena Corbera, 2006, 309-24.

99 Reilly, 1988, 227-28.

100 Reilly, 1988, 228; Fletcher, 1989, 161.

from the popes and their legates. Unlike the more powerful, rich, and traditional kingdom of León, Aragón had always had to adapt to survive. Pedro I confirmed the relationship soon after his succession in 1095. Through papal legates, Navarre and Aragón had access to the same network of ecclesiastical connections as León, and even more direct links to the papacy. In 1093 Sancho Ramírez was to send his youngest son to be a monk in the monastery of his close advisor and native papal legate, Frotard of Saint-Pons-de-Thomières. The conquest of Huesca in 1096 and Barbastro in 1100 by Pedro I of Aragón brought his nascent kingdom an injection of funds and perhaps some new artistic expertise, which he deployed to enhance his status.¹⁰¹ Shortly after each acquisition, Pedro sent gifts (*munera*) to the abbey of Cluny, in return for which he received a high level of intercession, and doubtless other institutions also benefited.¹⁰² This close connection with the friendship network may help to explain the prevalence of one motif in the kingdom of Aragón, the chrismon. Highly scribal in simple incised examples, this image adorned so many church doorways that it surely operated as a shorthand. More elaborate chrismons include allegorical examples at Santa Cruz de la Serós, evoking the door of heaven and the fountain of life, and the much-discussed tympanum over the west door of Jaca Cathedral.¹⁰³ At one level it may have been apotropaic, like the protective sacrificial blood applied to doorways at the Passover of the Israelites (Ex. 12:23), or the mark placed on the foreheads of the righteous to save them from destruction (Ez. 9:4-6). As a symbol of Christ and the Crucifixion, the chrismon had the ability to evoke his role as the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb. The more complex

'speaking' chrismons play with the form and add letters that link to theological ideas of the Trinity and to the Peace of God.¹⁰⁴ As Dulce Ocón has shown, these versions relate to the production of charters with seals, which had become increasingly important in the projection of authority in the second half of the eleventh century.¹⁰⁵ But whose authority and identity was invoked through these signs? Their use was certainly not limited to Aragón, and chrismons could be found not only across the north of the peninsula, albeit less densely outside Aragón and Navarre, but also on the other side of the Pyrenees, concentrated especially around Auch and southwest of Toulouse.¹⁰⁶ This distribution makes it unlikely that these carvings held specific national or regional connotations. The southwest of France not only had early Christian 'Aquitanian' sarcophagi with carved chrismons, but St. Orens, the fifth-century bishop of Auch, had written a commentary on the Trinity that described a cruciform chrismon with additional letters 'P' and 'I,' and an alpha and omega, as a symbol of Christ and the Peace of God.¹⁰⁷ Even so the earliest of the medieval examples may have been executed in Aragón, perhaps around 1095 (fig. 138). Ocón has also demonstrated the link between the chrismon, St. Peter, and the papacy, apparent on ancient sarcophagi as well as in early twelfth-century Catalan wall painting. Her example from the sarcophagus of Leocadius at Tarragona (fig. 35) is especially relevant, as it depicts the *traditio legis*, Christ entrusting the Church, in the form of a scroll, to St. Peter; the scroll is even marked with a chrismon, although the rough nature of the incised symbol means that it could have

101 Reilly, 1988, 311; Bishko, 1980, 42-43.

102 Bishko, 1961, 53-76, Additional Note, 78A-81A.

103 Mann, 2009, 132-60; Ocón, 2003, 89-101.

104 Favreau, 1985, 10-11; Mann, 2009, 135-36; Ocón, 2003, 75-101.

105 Bedos-Rezak, 2008, 1-7, and Bedos-Rezak, 2011, 99.

106 Favreau, 1985, 13-227.

107 Orens, 1847, col.1002.

Figure 138 Loarre castle (Aragón), chrismon carved above lower doorway



been added at a later date.¹⁰⁸ Taken together with the special interest in the chrismon around Auch, these arguments suggest that the papal legate, Amat of Oloron, may have been involved in its adoption in Aragón. The marriage of Sancho Ramírez's eldest son, Pedro, to Agnes, daughter of the Duke of Aquitaine, in 1086 is further evidence of ties between Aragón and the west of France.¹⁰⁹ The idea that the chrismon may have signified particular allegiance to the papacy gains credence when it is noted that many of the churches north of the Pyrennes where the chrismon is found were houses of regular canons, a form of religious institution

¹⁰⁸ Ocón, 2003, 95.

¹⁰⁹ Reilly, 1988, 179; Ubieto Arteta, 1951, 31.

Figure 139 Diptych (?) of Queen Felicia, Santa Cruz de la Serós (Aragón) (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)



Photograph: The Metropolitan Museum of Art

promoted by the papacy in the peninsula. The phenomenon of the chrismon also fits with legatine policy and its use of sarcophagus motifs. Yet again sarcophagi are used as suitable sources for artistic inspiration whereby a single motif is selected which then forms the basis of free interpretation.

A work of art from a different milieu supports the idea that artists formed in the Islamic tradition were involved in the production of sumptuary arts and sculpture in Aragón, and that the use of those artists was linked to the papal friendship network. Two matching silver gilt panels that display ivories bear the name of Queen Felicia of Aragón (fig. 139).¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ AMS, 1993, cat. no. 128, 268-69.

The panels used to be seen as book covers for an evangeliary donated by Felicia to the royal nunnery of Santa Cruz de la Serós outside Jaca but, as there are no fixings to suggest that function, they were probably votive objects, perhaps a diptych. Felicia de Roucy's brother had helped to defend Pope Gregory VII and remained close to the papal network.¹¹¹ She is associated with her husband Sancho Ramírez in a charter of 1093, where an annual census of 400 solidi of Jaca for the food and clothing of the nuns is promised to Santa Cruz de la Serós in exchange for the intercession of its nuns, its *ancillae Dei*, with the Virgin Mary.¹¹² The charter binds Sancho Ramírez's sons to continue the census. Santa Cruz was a family monastery, which operated in a similar way to San Isidoro at León, where the female members of the royal family, especially those who were unmarried or widowed, could shelter royal property and care for the family's *memoria*.¹¹³ In 1095 Sancha, sister of Sancho Ramírez, left a legacy for the fabric of the church in her will.¹¹⁴ Pedro I confirmed the donation for the souls of his father and Felicia in 1100, which suggests that by that date, and perhaps close to it, Felicia was dead.¹¹⁵ Therefore, the plaque that carries Felicia's name and not her husband's would fit best during her widowhood, between the death of Sancho Ramírez in 1094 and before her own death c. 1099. The two substantial silver-gilt wooden panels (26 x 21.6 cm and 26.7 x 19.1 cm) are both covered in pseudo-filigree and set with cabochons that look like precious stones but are mostly glass. One is a sapphire that

had been used as an early Islamic sealstone and has four of the ninety-nine 'Beautiful Names' of God etched on it.¹¹⁶ In the centre of the first panel is a Byzantine ivory, probably from the end of the tenth century, showing the triumphant crucified Christ presented by the Virgin Mary and St. John with small personifications of the sun and moon as busts set above Christ's arms. The carving is typical of classicising work from the Middle Byzantine period.¹¹⁷ The second frame encloses an oblong silver panel, slightly narrower and longer than the ivory, with IHC/NA/ZAR/EN/VS (Jesus Christ of Nazareth) written either side of the upper arm of a cross and FELI/CIA /REG/INA at the base of the cross, both in repoussé. A cruciform halo is also worked in the metal sheet. But the figures of Christ, the Virgin, and St. John, as well as personifications of the sun and moon, are all separately carved in ivory. Several features of the Christ figure are shared with the significantly larger ivory Carrizo Christ, associated with the infanta Urraca of León. The amount of ivory available to the artist in Aragón was minuscule in comparison to that in León. Whilst the tiny figures of the Virgin and St. John are simply carved in upright standing poses, the personifications are unusual in two ways. They revive the Carolingian iconography of a weeping Sun and Moon, but are carved in sitting poses more familiar from Islamic ivories. Very similar personifications of the sun and moon appear unexpectedly in sculptures remounted on the twelfth-century church of Saint-Pons-de-Thomières. This suggests that a sculptor or a group of sculptors may have worked for both Queen Felicia and for Abbot Frotard. The abbot had been such a close

111 Simon, 2011, 373.

112 *Cartulario de Santa Cruz de la Serós*, 1966, doc. 13, 31-32.

113 Walker, 1998a, 113-38; Mann, 2009, 90-91.

114 Mann, 2009, 115.

115 *Cartulario de Santa Cruz de la Serós*, 1966, doc. 20, 42-43; Abenza, 2014, 27-54.

116 AMS, 1993, 268.

117 For a comparison, see the tenth-century Borradaile Triptych, Constantinople, Eastmond, 2008, cat. no. 78 134 and 401.

advisor to her husband that in 1093 Sancho Ramírez entrusted their son, Ramiro, to him to become monk at Saint-Pons.¹¹⁸ It is possible that Felicia acquired the sculptor after Pedro I's conquest of Huesca in 1096, and that he carved the second crucifixion for her in response to the Byzantine piece. Afterwards she could have passed him, or loaned him, to Frotard so he could produce sculpture for the church where her son worshipped. Verónica Abenza has linked the particular filigree work found on the panels to other examples at Sainte-Foy at Conques.¹¹⁹ This kind of process may have been the norm across the north of the peninsula and beyond the Pyrenees. The expertise acquired by kings and their courtiers could have been regularly exchanged with members of the papal friendship network. Along with donations of resources, money, goods, and domestic slaves, such loans would have purchased spiritual benefits and the status conferred by association with the great reformed abbeys, especially Saint-Pierre at Cluny, Saint-Pons-de-Thomières, and Saint-Victor at Marseille.

At first sight, 1094 appears to be a significant year for architecture in Aragón, as three dated events occurred that could relate to building works. According to a twelfth-century copy of her will, Urraca, the sister of Sancho Ramírez, made a donation for work at the cathedral of Jaca (*ad laborem de sancti Petri de iacha*).¹²⁰ It is often claimed that this indicates that the structure was well advanced, but the project could equally have been at an earlier stage. The building was probably begun at the east end, which has been marred by the replacement of the central apse at the end of the eighteenth

Figure 140 Jaca cathedral (Aragón), south apse, exterior



century.¹²¹ The surviving masonry of the lateral apses is somewhat irregular, but clearly ashlar and not the rubble fill of Early Southern Romanesque. From the outset the building seems to have been conceived in a full Romanesque style, and the apse is articulated with an attached half-shaft and bands of billet moulding (fig. 140). The central window is flanked by two colonnettes with capitals, and surmounted by a generous roll moulding.¹²² The metopes between the corbels may have been added or rearranged at some point. As David Simon has suggested, the original cathedral probably had

¹¹⁸ Buesa Conde, 1996, 56–57 and 103–105.

¹¹⁹ Abenza, 2014, 27–54.

¹²⁰ Mann, 2009, 90; *Cartulario de Santa Cruz de la Serós*, 1966, 22–23.

¹²¹ Whitehill, 1941, 236; Moralejo, 1973b, 7–16; Simon, 2011, 369–374, 374–377 and 387–390.

¹²² Martínez de Aguirre, 2011, 214–20.

Figure 141 Loarre castle (Aragón), exterior

a wooden roof, which may have been intended to reference St. Peter's in Rome.¹²³ On the interior, the apse at Jaca is articulated by two orders, a band of billet moulding and, around the window, roll moulding, and colonnettes.

In the same year, shortly before his death, King Sancho held a large meeting at the castle of Loarre, where the attendees included Bishops Peter of Pamplona and Peter of Jaca, as well as the papal legate Frotard of St-Pons-de-Thomières and Abbot Aymericus of San Juan de la Peña. It has been suggested that the main purpose of the assembly was to consecrate the chapel, although it is also possible that the meeting was called only to make preparations for the Huesca campaign.¹²⁴ The castle of Loarre occupies a dramatic site northwest of Huesca, where it is

camouflaged against the surrounding rocky hills (fig. 141).¹²⁵ Most scholars maintain that it was founded by Christians c. 1030 and only seized by Muslims in 1062, but the choice of site is characteristically Islamic, so there may have been an earlier occupation.¹²⁶ Some time after King Sancho Ramírez reclaimed the site around 1071, he introduced canons, and it is they who are thought to have commissioned the chapel of St. Peter that dominates the site.¹²⁷ The canons left to set up new headquarters at Montearagón c. 1097, but retained Loarre as a source of income for the peripatetic 'royal chapel' to judge from a charter of 1099.¹²⁸ Katharine Watson

¹²³ Simon, 2011, 386-90.

¹²⁴ Poza, 2009, 24.

¹²⁵ Martínez de Aguirre, 2009b, 102-105.

¹²⁶ Araguas, 1991, 167; Martínez Prades, 2005, 201-16.

¹²⁷ Martínez de Aguirre, 2009b, 89-124; Español, 2005-2006, 13.

¹²⁸ Durán Gudiol, 1991, 82; Ubieto, 1951, no. 62, 298-300.

believed that the architecture and sculpture at Loarre had to belong to the early 1090s because of the move to Montearagón, but the idea that the finest building and sculpture was reserved for the frontier sites may be flawed.¹²⁹ Given the volatile military climate, it may have made more sense to concentrate building projects on sites that were secured and safe from attack, like Loarre and Jaca. Some evidence for dating comes from an epitaph of 1095 mounted below the chapel, on a door jamb by a staircase, but this cannot date the building above. It is possible that work was interrupted under Pedro I, whilst he concentrated on the conquest of Huesca and Barbastro, and work could have been restarted under Alfonso I of Aragón, 'the Battler'. Alfonso I was the patron of San Millán at Segovia, far to the south, a church that shares much of the aesthetic of Loarre. It should also be borne in mind that the chapel at Loarre was substantially restored in the early twentieth century, removing the baroque structures that obscured its Romanesque aspect, and again in the 1940s and 1970s.¹³⁰ Watson focused on the roll corbels, which are now oddly located below the squinches of the dome, but may have originally been carved for a corbel table either over the portal or around the exterior of the apse.¹³¹ There are close parallels between the facial features of one of the corbel heads at Loarre and some of the marble heads at Toulouse, as Watson noted, but it is equally possible to draw comparisons with the features on the tomb of Alfonso Ansúrez at Sahagún and on corbels at San Martín at Frómista, which have a similar combination of beardless and bearded faces. In any case the corbels at Loarre were probably carved before the capitals in the chapel, with which they have little in common. The highly

unusual dome at Loarre with its double superimposed squinches most likely belongs, like the capitals, to a later twelfth-century phase of building. Certainly such a date would work better for the developed and eclectic sculpture in the chapel.

A ceremony of consecration took place at San Juan de la Peña in December 1094. As King Sancho had died earlier in the year and been buried temporarily at Montearagón, this ceremony may have sanctified the new church in readiness for the translation of his body and re-interment.¹³² It is likely that the eastern bays had been more or less completed by this date, and perhaps in a hurry. At the ceremony, the new king, Pedro I, was supported by his aunt, Sancha. The two papal legates in attendance were Amat of Bordeaux and Frotard of St-Pons-de-Thomières, along with Peter, bishop of Jaca, Godefroy, bishop of Maguelonne, and Raymond, abbot of Leire. The new building at San Juan de la Peña consisted of an upper church with three apses decorated with blind arcading, a frieze of billet moulding above the arcade, half-domes, two orders of barrel vaulting, and mostly simple geometric or foliate capitals (fig. 142). One of these is a small rinceaux capital that relates to the example at San Salvador de Nogales, although, as Janice Mann has pointed out, the closest analogues are at Santa María de Iguácel, and Santa María de Ujue in Navarre, both of which are probably later than San Juan de la Peña. A fragmentary and roughly carved capital at San Juan de la Peña may portray Habakkuk bringing bread and water to Daniel in the Lions' Den, and other historiated capitals may once have decorated the sanctuary.¹³³ Considering that San Juan de la Peña was the chosen burial site of the Aragonese monarchy at this time, the ornament is modest in comparison with

129 Watson, 1978, 297-98.

130 Garris Fernández, 2008, 575-94.

131 Watson, 1978, 299; Poza, 2009, 64-78.

132 Nelson, 1991, 21.

133 Simon, 1975, 50-54.

Figure 142 San Juan de la Peña (Aragón), eastern chapels, interior

Fernando I's place of burial at San Isidoro in León. Aragón was likewise behind León in the production of illuminated manuscripts at the end of the eleventh century. In conclusion, the year of 1094 does not necessarily emerge as an important landmark.

Multiplying the Links from c. 1095

From around 1095 the pace and complexity of artistic exchanges increased markedly, and the members of the papal friendship network had more opportunity for more regular and larger meetings. Urban II processed through France in 1095 and 1096, and Paschal II (1099-1118), who as Cardinal Rainerius had visited Santiago de Compostela in 1090, held many of his synods

outside Rome.¹³⁴ Members of the friendship network also visited Rome, including Pons (Ebontius), the new bishop of Barbastro, a protégé of Frotard and of Abbot Bego of Sainte-Foy at Conques.¹³⁵ Pope Paschal II entrusted to him a relic of the True Cross that was to be given to Abbot Bego. An inscription on a portable altar at Conques, a slab of porphyry with silver-gilt and niello decoration, duly records its dedication by Bishop Pons on 26 June 1100. It goes on to claim that the altar contained relics of Christ's Cross and Sepulchre, amongst many others, all placed in it by Pons, although it does not mention that they originated in Rome.¹³⁶ Old ties were strengthened, and Cardinal Richard

¹³⁴ Robinson, 1990, 127; Blumenthal, 1978, 7-10, 32-43, 74-82, 102-106.

¹³⁵ Garland, 2010, 331; Garland, 2000, 99-100.

¹³⁶ See Garland, 2010, cat. no. 14, 330-33.

of Saint-Victor of Marseille was reappointed papal legate by Paschal II. He went back to Palencia in 1100, where Alfonso VI was convening another council. The business included support for the Catalan canons of the cathedral of Palencia and for Braga in Portugal. On his way home Richard visited Barbastro to receive a donation from Peter of Pamplona, who had attended the council, as had Diego Gelmírez as bishop-elect of Santiago de Compostela. It is possible that this meeting refreshed the artistic contact between Santiago, Toulouse, and Conques, as Peter of Pamplona had strong links with both communities north of the Pyrenees. Bishop Peter was at Santiago c. 1105 consecrating a chapel to Sainte Foy of Conques. He was also a *socius* of Cluny, where he was found c. 1110-1115 consecrating a chapel to Christ, the Virgin, and the Archangel Gabriel in the south transept of its new church.¹³⁷ And he was frequently in Toulouse, where he died in 1115. Diego Gelmírez and Peter of Pamplona even shared a craftsman in the person of a certain 'Stephen'.¹³⁸ His presence is documented in Pamplona in June 1101, when he is described variously as an artisan or as a master of the works at Santiago.¹³⁹ It used to be thought that he was one of the sculptors, but is now generally agreed that it is much more likely he laid out the foundations of the polygonal chapels of St. Foy and St. Andrew at Santiago, as the Romanesque cathedral at Pamplona also had a polygonal central apse.¹⁴⁰

One of the distinguishing characteristics of these chapels at Santiago is an increase in the number of masons' marks indicating the arrival

of a new team.¹⁴¹ It has been suggested that the differences between the three eastern chapels and those of St. Foy and St. Andrew could represent a pause in the work brought about by the deposition of Bishop Pelaéz in 1088. That remains a possibility, but the departure of Pelaéz may not have occasioned a sudden cessation, and Stephen may not have arrived at Santiago until well into the 1090s. The increase in the number of masons' marks fits more widely with a post-1090 date, as that was the time when they became more prevalent elsewhere in Europe.¹⁴² Two charters naming Stephen date to 1101, but they survive only in a thirteenth-century cartulary.¹⁴³ They record Bishop Peter of Pamplona's gift of houses and vineyards to Stephen, to his wife, Mancia, and to his sons and daughters. As exceptional survivals, these texts have come to dominate the literature, even though the nature of any 'contract' with Stephen is not explicit. The first charter rewards Stephen, the 'maker of work' (*opifex*), for the good service (*pro servitio bono*) that he has performed for the bishop and the church of Santa María at Pamplona and, God willing, shall undertake. This copy lists not only Peter of Pamplona but also Pons, bishop of Barbastro, the abbots of Saint-Pons-de-Thomières and Leire, and Diego Gelmírez of Compostela as witnesses; Stephen is not listed amongst the attendees. Doubt has been cast on the likelihood of Gelmírez visiting Pamplona so soon after his consecration in April 1101, but if Bishop Godefroy of Maguelonne had come to Santiago to carry it out, it would have made sense for Gelmírez to accompany him as far as Pamplona.¹⁴⁴ The second charter no longer has a list of witnesses but repeats the grant (*donatio*) and describes Stephen more

137 Stratford, 2010, 103.

138 Williams, 2010b, 200.

139 Lacarra, 1931, 73-86; Ocaña Eiroa, 2003, 7-58; Castiñeiras, 2010b, 41-48.

140 Castiñeiras, 2010b, 34-5 and 41-8; Williams, 2008a, 157-77.

141 Alexander, 2014, 144 and 159.

142 Alexander, 2007, 79-80.

143 Lacarra, 1931, 73-86; Ocaña Eiroa, 2003, 7-58.

144 Fletcher, 1984, 112-13.

precisely as master of the work of St. James (*magister operis Sancti Jacobi*). Although these charters tell us nothing of Stephen's expertise, status, or origin, a considerable biography has been built on these brief phrases, as Moralejo noted.¹⁴⁵ The form of Stephen's name used in the charters, *Stephanus*, suggests that he may have been from north of the Pyrenees, where the architectural expertise found at Santiago de Compostela and at Pamplona originated, although names provide unreliable evidence for origins. The family of Stephen's wife were local, however, and the gift enhanced his place in the Pamplonan community and its rural economy, thus encouraging stability and not travel. Perhaps Peter of Pamplona wished to ensure that this particular craftsman would continue to work on his cathedral.

It may be helpful to consider sculptural developments within this context, where social and political links multiplied and tightened around 1100. Moralejo identified traits of the master of the Sahagún tomb on two corbels at San Martín de Frómista, in particular his treatment of eyes, the low hairline, protruding eyes, straight noses with low nostrils, and thick lower lips, but variations of this facial type flourished locally above all at the monastery of San Zoilo at Carrión de los Condes.¹⁴⁶ Count Gómez Díaz and Countess Teresa, members of the Banū Gómez family, and distant relatives of Pedro Ansúrez, had built the church along with a bridge for travellers.¹⁴⁷ Their son, Fernando, had brought relics of St. Zoilus and St. Felix from Córdoba, the former an early Christian martyr and the latter one of the ninth-century martyrs. They may have been wrapped in one of the fine Islamic textiles recently found in the

monastery.¹⁴⁸ When she was widowed in 1076, Teresa gave San Zoilo to Cluny and retired to the Cluniac nunnery of Marcigny in Burgundy; nonetheless she was buried at San Zoilo when she died in June 1093.¹⁴⁹ The Cluniacs built a relatively modest narthex to protect the burials, and rebuilt the church. Other churches also received galilee narthexes, not only San Isidoro at León, but also San Isidro de Dueñas, SS. Facundus and Primitivus at Sahagún, and probably San Martín at Frómista, Santa María at Nájera, San Salvador at Oña, and San Pedro at Arlanza. It was presumably a way of modernising a church in a short space of time, before undertaking a more major rebuilding project. José Luis Senra has worked most extensively on these western galilee-narthex chapels, and on San Zoilo in particular.¹⁵⁰ The work on the narthex and its sculpture may have been largely complete by 1103, when a council was held at Carrión de los Condes, presided over by Archbishop Bernard of Toledo. It brought together not only the bishops of León and Castile but also Alfonso VI, his new queen Elizabeth, his young heir Sancho, and both of his daughters, Urraca and Teresa, with their husbands, Raymond of Burgundy and Count Henry of Portugal.

In 1993 the Romanesque west portal of the church of San Zoilo was found perfectly preserved behind later masonry, although the rest of the narthex had been demolished.¹⁵¹ Two roll-mouldings with fillets rest on deeply carved imposts, sculpted capitals, and reused Roman marble columns. The carving on the four capitals, and that on other displaced capitals found on the site, shows a distinct affinity with the marble sarcophagus lid of Alfonso Ansúrez,

145 Moralejo, 1983, 227.

146 Moralejo, 1985, 76 and fig. 7.

147 Pérez Celada, 1986, doc. 7, 15-18.

148 Senra, 2004, 332-40.

149 Senra, 2006, 240-243.

150 Senra, 2011a, 335-66; Senra, 1997, 122-144.

151 Senra, 1994, 57-72.

even though the relief is much higher, perhaps because the limestone used at San Zoilo was easier to carve.¹⁵² The sculpture also shows a clear awareness of the nearby capitals at Nogal de las Huertas, especially their *pitons d'angle*, and of the figures riding lions at Frómista. The iconography is occasionally somewhat obscure, especially the capital where four men carry tiny winged busts on platforms, perhaps reliquaries or a reference to the Ark of the Covenant (1 Kings 6.23-33).¹⁵³ The figures on this capital have distinctive long faces and large heads, and they interact energetically with the architectural form, not afraid to lean outwards. One capital features supple figures tending vines, whilst above, between profuse volutes, a large human head supports the impost with its flat coronet, and two hands grip the vine tendrils pulling them above the *pitons d'angle*. A third capital, one of those flanking the doorway, offers a dramatic version of Balaam and the Ass (Num. 22: 1-38), a subject and design also found in the Pantheon at San Isidoro, at Saint-Sernin in Toulouse, and at Jaca Cathedral. At San Zoilo the scene is at its most dramatic: the large central figure of the angel raises his sword against a beast that lurks on the back of the capital, and his left arm to stop the ass, whilst Balaam rides toward him along the other face of the capital (fig. 143), a solution already adopted at San Isidoro de León. Two substantial *pitons d'angle* divide the scene. The upper part of the angel, his pose, wings, and drapery, resonates with the archangels on the Sahagún tomb.¹⁵⁴ A further link with Jaca is provided by a capital now detached from its architectural setting. It portrays two musicians with braided hair; it

¹⁵² Senra, 2008, 69.

¹⁵³ Senra, 2008, 62.

¹⁵⁴ Senra, 2008, 43-44; a conclusion that I reached independently: the Daniel in the Lions' Den capital likewise echoes the Sahagún tomb lid.

Figure 143 Carrión de los Condes (Palencia), San Zoilo, west doorway, capital, Balaam and the ass



one appears to tap his foot whilst playing a bowed fiddle, and a second plays a pan flute, kneeling on the torus of the capital and gripping the downturned leaf of the volute to steady himself (fig. 144). They clearly foreshadow, or derive from, one of the finest and most inventive capitals at the cathedral, that depicting King David and his musicians. King David, for example, wears a square-edged crown that helps to support the impost recalling the head on the vine capital at San Zoilo. The capital at Jaca is more complex and finely carved, but it lacks the robust and playful interaction with the capital form found at San Zoilo.

Serafín Moralejo noted the dependence of some of the Jaca capitals on the Husillos

Figure 144 Carrión de los Condes (Palencia), San Zoilo, capital with musicians



sarcophagus, in particular a two-sided capital depicting the Sacrifice of Abraham, and thus proposed that sculptors moved from Frómista to work at Jaca.¹⁵⁵ David Simon has also demonstrated how a taste for the antique imbued the early Romanesque carving at Jaca.¹⁵⁶ Prado-Vilar has described how the Jaca sculptors mined the sarcophagus above all for a 'repertory of forms', dissecting and recasting them in different biblical roles.¹⁵⁷ This is palpable in the formal and studied nature of the carving at Jaca, completely at odds with the energy of San Zoilo. The different approaches are clear in the Balaam and the Ass capitals: the iconography and basic design, divided by a *piton d'angle*, is shared, but the delicate Jaca angel relies on swirling 'Husillos' drapery to enhance his status (fig. 145), whilst the physicality of the San Zoilo angel is sufficient (fig. 143). The Jaca capital that was key to Moralejo's argument depicts the Sacrifice of Abraham (fig. 146). Both the draped figure of Abraham and the nude figure of Isaac owe their form to an analysis of the Husillos sarcophagus. The classically moulded body of Isaac stands exposed

¹⁵⁵ Moralejo, 1973b, 7-16; Moralejo, 1979, 79-106.

¹⁵⁶ Simon, 2011, 379-83; Senra, 2002, 275-83.

¹⁵⁷ Prado-Vilar, 2011, 104.

Figure 145 Jaca cathedral (Aragón), capital, Balaam and the ass



below the volute, about to be sacrificed. To his right, Abraham leans back to wield the sacrificial knife, his robe flowing along the line of the volute to accentuate the diagonal structure of the carving; the angel to his right reaches to seize the knife. Despite the drama of the scene, the remarkably classical nature of the figures and their small faces render it somehow academic. In summary, it seems more plausible that the sculptor at Jaca was not the same artist who first took inspiration from the Husillos sarcophagus, but was responding to it anew, in full knowledge of the work that it and other sarcophagi had inspired over a decade or more. Richard of Saint-Victor's return to Palencia via Aragón could have played a role in this artistic conversation, but by the first

Figure 146 Jaca cathedral (Aragón), capital, Sacrifice of Abraham



years of the twelfth century many other routes of transmission were available.

In 1104 Alfonso VI apparently exiled his erstwhile friend, Pedro Ansúrez. He went to the Pyrenean county of Urgell, where his grandson, the future Ermengol VI, was a minor, since his father had died at Mollerusa fighting the Almoravids.¹⁵⁸ In 1105 Pedro Ansúrez fought alongside the Urgellians and Ramon Berenguer III of Barcelona to take Balaguer, a conquest that may have brought them all significant wealth.¹⁵⁹ In Urgell, Pedro was in territory where Saint-Victor of Marseille played a major role in reform. In 1096 Artau II, count of the adjacent

county of Pallars Sobirà, and his wife, Eslonça, had given the monastery of Santa María de Gerri de la Sal to the abbey of Saint-Victor of Marseilles to be reformed by Abbot Richard. The gift was confirmed by their relation, the notable reformer Bishop Ot of Urgell, who was buried there in 1122.¹⁶⁰ Pedro would doubtless have also been shown the church of Sant Pere de Àger, where his son's ancestor, Ermengol III, was buried. There he would have seen a remarkable antique sarcophagus that depicts a sea *thiasos*, a celebratory gathering of Poseidon and his Nereids.¹⁶¹ Moralejo thought that this sarcophagus, and the way that the figures ride through the waves, might have inspired a capital with a baptismal theme in the nave at Jaca where figures also walk through water.¹⁶² A related carving can be found at Santiago de Compostela on a capital that depicts a scene of St. Foy's martyrdom, likewise apparently set in water. It may have originally been located in the chapel of St. Foy, which was dedicated by Bishop Peter of Pamplona c. 1105, whose journey could help to explain the appearance of this particular iconography in a new setting.¹⁶³ A third example of this aquatic theme occurs in the small Aragonese church of Iguácel, which had belonged to San Juan de la Peña from 1080. The relevant capital depicts figures with 'Husillos', braided hair standing in swirling water but, as it forms part of the blind arcading added to the interior of the apse, it probably belongs to a c. 1120 refurbishment.¹⁶⁴ For all its geographical remoteness Sant Pere de Àger was not an artistic backwater and its walls were covered with Byzantinising paintings that can be compared

¹⁵⁸ Reilly, 2008, 109-26.

¹⁵⁹ Reilly, 2008, 116-17.

¹⁶⁰ Puig i Ferreté, 1991, doc. 55, 40-1.

¹⁶¹ Clavería, 2001, 34 and pl. 7.

¹⁶² Moralejo, 1984, 279-88; Fité, 2007, 14-17.

¹⁶³ Moralejo, 1979, 79-106.

¹⁶⁴ Martínez de Aguirre, 2011, 229-36: '*ut det requiem eternam*'. See also Moralejo, 1975, 142-143.

with those executed around the same time at Berzé-la-Ville for the abbot of Cluny.¹⁶⁵ Only two figures of saints survive from the scheme at Àger, but given the funerary nature of the church it is likely that it had an intercessory theme in common with painted apses in other small churches in the region.

Examples from adjacent counties, notably Santa Maria d'Àneu, Sant Pere del Burgal (Pallars Sobirà), and Sant Quirze de Pedret in Berguedà give some impression of the rich decoration applied to the walls of churches at this period (fig. 147). These paintings have clear stylistic links to southern Italy and often incorporated references to Gregorian reform.¹⁶⁶ Although fictive hangings were a regular feature in the paintings, churches were also draped in physical textiles, changed in accordance with the liturgical year. Most are lost or exist only as fragments, but one example in the cathedral of Girona is exceptional for its technique and its survival. Women, of unknown status and origin, in the monastery of Sant Daniel in Girona, were the probable embroiderers of this large woollen fabric for Girona Cathedral.¹⁶⁷ They used a carpet technique, imported from Egypt or Anatolia to the *taifa* kingdoms of Spain in the eleventh century, to realise an image of the Creation of the world and its Salvation. The iconography of three of the borders concerns time, represented by the labours of the month and the zodiac, drawing on a classical vocabulary familiar from manuscripts in the monastery of Ripoll; equally classical personifications of the winds fill the spandrels. A narrative of Empress Helena finding the True Cross runs along the lower edge, one of the features that have prompted Manuel Castiñeiras to link this piece

Figure 147 Sant Quirze de Pedret, wall painting, Foolish Virgins (MNAC, Barcelona)



Photograph: MNAC

to Gregorian reform. A large wheel of creation occupies the centre of the embroidery, where a youthful Christ presides over the seven days of the Creation of the world. The sense of wonder engendered by this hanging is accentuated by the additional space allotted to Adam as he names the animals, surrounded by a panoply of quadrupeds, birds, and sea-creatures (fig. 148).

Flat Slab Relief Sculpture

Artistic and intellectual dialogue with ancient sarcophagi was raised to a new level in the earliest years of the twelfth century. In addition to the capitals and corbels that received

165 Pagès i Paretas, 2010, 151-66.

166 Guardia, 2009b, 117-59; Castiñeiras, 2009, 48-66; Castiñeiras, 2010c, 276-90.

167 Castiñeiras, 2011, 36-40; Castiñeiras, 2014, 209-14.

Figure 148 Girona 'tapestry' (Museo de la Catedral de Girona), Adam Naming the Animals

Photograph: Girona Cathedral Chapter – All rights reserved

decoration during the 1080s, this period saw the introduction of flat slab relief sculpture, much of it made from reused Roman slabs or sarcophagi. This phenomenon was not limited to the peninsula, but was found, in different forms, north and south of the Pyrenees, in centres that had access to experienced craftsmen. On the roof above the southern apse at Jaca a corbel, highlighted by Serafin Moralejo, was sculpted as an angel flying amongst clouds. It shows an affinity with liturgical marble carving from Saint-Sernin at Toulouse, in particular with the angels on the marble altar table usually assumed to have been dedicated by Urban II in 1096.¹⁶⁸ In Toulouse, ancient sarcophagi were recarved with large effigies of

¹⁶⁸ Moralejo, 1973b, 57-64.

Christ and angels, which probably formed part of the setting for the shrine of St. Saturninus, and smaller flat slab reliefs were mounted over the *Porte des Comtes*. At Moissac, in the years after 1100, an almost life-size effigy of the mid-eleventh-century Abbot Durandus dominated the cloister alongside others of the apostles, and at Saint-Victor in Marseille, a funerary effigy of their mid-eleventh-century reforming abbot, Isarn, may once have stood in their cloister, although it is now in the crypt. Slabs with geometric designs or rosettes form metopes over the south transept doorway of Sainte-Foy at Conques, as well as decorating the underside, the soffit, of the entablature. At Jaca the metopes, now on the exterior of the south apse chapel, are carved with zoomorphic images, including a camel, a lion, and a bear, as well as a

Figure 149 Loarre castle (Aragón), flat slab sculpture above the entrance



bird, two human figures in classical poses, and an interlace pattern. The animal forms resonate with those found on the apse capitals at San Isidoro de León, which were probably reused from the work begun by the infanta Urraca in the 1090s. San Isidoro also has a set of flat slab carvings, now mounted above the Portal of the Lamb, six of which depict signs of the zodiac, which may originally have been metopes over the same doorway.¹⁶⁹ Metopes also survive from San Quirce de Burgos and probably from the transept doors at Santiago de Compostela, again not in their original positions.¹⁷⁰ These doorways may preserve an impression of their original designs, which owed something to classical ideas of entablature, but also showed

an awareness of articulated doorways in al-Andalus, especially the Bāb al-Wuzarā in Córdoba. In the west of France, north of Auch, flat slab reliefs encrusted western façades, an approach that was pursued to a lesser extent in the north of Spain. It is not always possible to determine the original position of slab reliefs, as many were cut and inserted into other spaces at a later stage, but a set of slabs has survived in a fragmentary state above the entrance to the castle of Loarre (fig. 149).¹⁷¹ Originally they depicted Christ in Majesty, in a mandorla surrounded by evangelist symbols, flanked by the archangels Gabriel and Michael. This iconography, with similar tituli, relates to the Pyrenean wall painting programmes. To either side, figures probably depicting the Elders of the Apocalypse, walk towards Christ through

¹⁶⁹ Moralejo, 1976, 131-73; Moralejo, 1976, 131-73.

¹⁷⁰ See forthcoming doctoral thesis by Amanda Dotseth, Courtauld Institute of Art.

¹⁷¹ Español, 2005-2006, 7-18.

Figure 150 León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, tympanum over south doorway, Portal of the Lamb

waves, perhaps the crystal sea of the apocalyptic vision, indicating that this may be yet another piece of carving inspired by the *thiasos* sarcophagus at Àger.¹⁷²

In the kingdom of León, one of these slabs now forms part of the tympanum over the south door at San Isidoro de León (fig. 150), known as the Portal of the Lamb (*Puerta del Cordero*), although it may have originally been placed above a doorway without the encompassing frame of the tympanum, as at Loarre. This means that I shall consider it here without the sculptures of two angels and the Lamb of God now associated with it. As Francisco Prado-Vilar has shown so convincingly, the slab is a response to the presentation of narrative found on pagan sarcophagi, like that at Husillos.¹⁷³ In

its size, rhythms, and design this slab reinvents early Christian sarcophagi. On those earlier examples, Christ often appeared in more than one scene, like a cartoon, but at San Isidoro it is Isaac who appears more than once. The story portrayed on this slab is the popular theme of the Sacrifice of Abraham, the ultimate demonstration of his faith. On the right, his mother, Sarah, watches him depart on a horse. Isaac then appears twice more, removing his sandals to make himself a fitting sacrifice and in the central scene with Abraham's dagger at his neck. This central image is found on myriad early Christian sarcophagi, in the catacombs at Rome, and on countless Romanesque capitals. Abraham is about to plunge the knife into his son, but an angel intervenes and a ram waits in the wings to replace Isaac. Exceptionally at San Isidoro, figures of Hagar and her son, Ishmael, are placed to the left of the central

¹⁷² Mann, 2009, 137-39.

¹⁷³ Prado-Vilar, 2008, 188-90.

scene, balancing those of Sarah and Isaac to the right. Whereas the faces of Isaac, Sarah, and Hagar relate more to the style of the Saint-Orens sarcophagus and its earlier adaptations in the Pantheon at San Isidoro, the facial features and beard of Abraham and the bucolic background of the scene suggest that this sculptor was aware of a broad range of sarcophagi. These may have included antique sarcophagi like that of Fernán González at San Pedro de Arlanza and more classical renderings of the Sacrifice of Abraham on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus in Rome or its counterpart in Córdoba. A similar style is found on some of the flat relief slabs at Santiago de Compostela, especially in the Adam and Eve cycle once set over its north transept door.

John Williams, Therèse Martin, and Francisco Prado-Vilar have all proposed plausible readings of the Portal of the Lamb.¹⁷⁴ Williams has seen it as a statement about *reconquista*, Martin as a political statement of Queen Urraca, and Prado-Vilar as a dynastic argument put forward by the Infanta Urraca. Another interpretation will close this book. This subject matter was, and is, highly contested; what is sometimes called 'the Abrahamic triangle' has strong exegetical and emotional meaning for Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and the emblematic figures of Sarah and Hagar continue to be invoked in contemporary interfaith debates and political negotiations.¹⁷⁵ Around 1100, the depiction of these narratives would have been no less controversial. Since Williams's seminal article and Moralejo's favourable response to it, the Pauline text on Hagar and Ishmael, Galatians 4, has been accepted as the main textual lens through which we should view

this sculpture. However, it is difficult to see the words of Paul's letter to the Galatians in the sculpted narrative. St. Paul says: 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman', yet the Hagar at San Isidoro stands confidently next to the angel who is about to intervene in the Sacrifice, recalling her own privileged meeting with an angel and her exceptional naming of God. Although her son, Ishmael, is located on the edge of the panel, he is neutrally depicted. The original Genesis text tells the story in more detail. In accordance with that, Ishmael could have been shown as the 'wild man', whose 'hand will be against all and the hand of all against him' (Gen. 16:12), but the depiction of Ishmael as an archer is specific in its reference to another verse in the Book of Genesis: 'And God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer' (Gen. 21:20). The Old Testament portrayal of Ishmael is not negative, but runs parallel to that of Isaac, a symmetry that is mirrored in the sculpture. In Genesis, Ishmael attends the burial of Abraham and is the father of twelve sons that beget twelve tribes, as was Jacob. His descendants are as God-given as Isaac's, even though his mother is a bondwoman.¹⁷⁶ This image of Ishmael the archer cannot help but recall the ideal figure of the Islamic warrior, but again that may not have had negative associations c. 1100, as Islamic military accoutrements were greatly valued. On the opposite side of the panel stands Sarah, Abraham's wife, in the doorway of her tent. As Williams pointed out, this shows the moment at which God revealed her part in the history of the Chosen: that she was to bear a son.¹⁷⁷ This was and is a crucial passage for Judaism. The centre of the panel portrays the narrative of

174 Williams, 1977, 3-14; Martin, 2006, 101-105; Martin, 2003, 181-205.

175 Schoenfeld, 2013, 1-2; for example, Firestone, 2008, 108-123, and essays in Tribble, 2006.

176 Gen. 21:13.

177 Williams, 1977, 5.

the next chapter of Genesis, a scene that was equally central to Christianity and to Judaism. For Jews, the Sacrifice of Abraham led to God's promise to the sons of Abraham; for Christians it was a prefiguration of the crucifixion of Christ. The symmetrical design of the frieze did not necessarily imply opposition, as the covenant between God and Abraham, made possible by Abraham's demonstration of faith, was offered as a blessing for all the peoples of the earth and represented a bond with the descendants of Isaac, the Jews, and those of Ishmael, the Muslims.¹⁷⁸ The context highlighted by Prado-Vilar, Alfonso VI's succession problem, is important for this reading. Lacking a male heir with his aristocratic European queens, Alfonso VI chose from 1103 to promote his son, Sancho, as a prominent member of the court and possibly as his heir.¹⁷⁹ The circumstances of Sancho's birth and the identity of his mother remain uncertain. According to Pelayo of Oviedo, he was the son of a concubine, called Zaida, the daughter or daughter-in-law of al-Mu'tamid, the ruler of the taifa kingdom of Seville.¹⁸⁰ Some scholars think that Zaida was the same person as the queen named in documents as 'Elizabeth', and that she took the new name after converting to

Christianity. The name selected for Sancho, the name of Alfonso and Urraca's dead brother, and not that of their father, Fernando I, as might have been expected, may mark him as a figure of reconciliation or penitence. Perhaps Alfonso VI hoped that in the person of Sancho, the different populations of his realm, Christians, Jews, and Muslims might find new ways of existing together in the kingdom of León, not as a sentimental vision of *convivencia* but, as they had in al-Andalus, with the crucial difference that now the ruler would be Christian, and the Jewish and Muslim communities would be subject to him. The *dhimmi* rules would be inverted.¹⁸¹ Alfonso VI's legacy might have been a Christian version of the Caliphate, but Sancho did not live to bring about a new covenant in León, as he was killed in the battle of Uclés, one year before Alfonso VI's death. In a last attempt to provide stability for his realm, Alfonso VI arranged for his eldest daughter, Urraca, recently widowed after the death of Raymond of Burgundy, to marry Alfonso I of Aragón. The marriage was to fail and a period of disruption to ensue despite the best efforts of Queen Urraca. The north of the peninsula was no longer a propitious environment for artistic production.

178 North, 1993, 4-5.

179 Reilly, 1988, 313-14; d'Emilio, 1992, 193-94; Christys, 2008, 102-107.

180 Christys, 2008, 87-108: the earliest record of this comes from the notorious forger Pelayo of Oviedo; Reilly, 1988, 313-14, 329.

181 Meyerson, 1991, 3; Soifer, 2009, 24.

Epilogue

This book has brought together material from a wide chronological range and many different approaches to researching it, but there have been certain continuities, and some helpful cross-fertilisation. The reworking of classical art and the use of *spolia* have been recurring themes. The physical infrastructure laid down by the second century AD provided not only a substrate, but also much of the material used in later buildings. Reinforced by an awareness of Byzantium, classical visual vocabularies were claimed and constantly reinvented over these centuries. In the Visigothic period, occasional pockets of artistic activity, linked to trade across the Mediterranean, enlivened a widespread loss of expertise, but the classical past was more often perpetuated by grafting new identities onto pre-existing buildings or objects. Arriving in the eighth century, the Umayyads brought their own version of this legacy, already formulated in the East, but they also responded to the antique cities of Córdoba and Mérida. In the middle of the unsettled ninth century, Asturias and al-Andalus found themselves facing a common enemy, the Norsemen; this may have led to a moment of artistic collaboration and the construction of the belvedere at Monte Naranco. Around 900, short-lived military success in the Christian north encouraged chroniclers and painters to create fictive pasts, using words and images in a theatrical fashion. But the heights of artistic achievement and imaginative invention were reached only in the mid- to late tenth century when the caliphs of al-Andalus built Madīnat al-Zahrā and extended the Great Mosque of Córdoba. The aesthetics of both enterprises were echoed in the north with equally inventive, though not as well-resourced projects.

Alongside complex architectural solutions and elaborate vaulting, intricate carving of marble and ivory defines this period, even if at the time metalwork and fabrics would have had more visual and economic impact. With the collapse of the Caliphate came dispersal of wealth, objects, and expertise, to North Africa, to the fragmented taifa kingdoms of al-Andalus, and to a limited extent to the north. Principally, the Catalan aristocrats and churchmen who had come to the aid of the caliph benefited; they were able to commission carved marble altars and gold frontals to adorn the sanctuaries of new cathedrals, abbeys, and collegiate churches, whilst their treasuries overflowed with new acquisitions. Such riches bought increased access to ecclesiastical networks north of the Pyrenees from Fleury, to Limoges and Cluny. This finite injection of wealth was supported by a resurgence in trade, but a regular income was secured only in the mid-eleventh century when mercenary payments transmuted into *parias* or protection payments. The system was swiftly adopted by other northern kingdoms, above all León, which extracted payments from Seville, Toledo, and Zaragoza. Around the same time accomplished ivory carving was found on reliquaries in León and La Rioja, suggesting that skilled labour sometimes formed part of the payments alongside gold, silver, and portable objects. *Paria* payments helped to fund new architectural projects, most notably at the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela. After 1085, when Alfonso VI occupied Toledo, skilled stone carving suddenly appeared at in the Pantheon at San Isidoro in León and in the eastern chapel at Santiago.

Despite strong tensions and sporadic aggression, mutual obligations, negotiation, and

exchange linked people across the peninsula along the network of roads from the eighth to the eleventh century. Systems functioned largely irrespective of religion, and Mozarabic Christians or Jewish ministers offered mediation where it was needed. Exchange involved booty taken during raids, captive slaves, ransom, and mercenary payments, as well as protection money. Diplomatic gifts appeared more genteel – and sometimes were – but they too, represented power relationships: subjugation, emulation, alliance, or rivalry. Although the movement of objects was an important expression of these social, political, and economic networks, the exchange of craftsmen may have been just as important. Technical mastery always had a mystique, from quarrying perfect monoliths to carving minute details on ivory, from casting gold to weaving fine silks. The ability to command such skilled people was a necessary part of rulership, and many artisans, whilst being provided with excellent working conditions, may have been unfree and thus unable to determine their places of work. None of this was exceptional in the Early Middle Ages, but the peninsula provided unusual opportunities in the eleventh century for artistic synthesis between craftsmen trained in different traditions. Partnerships between northern goldsmiths and Andalusí ivory carvers were particularly productive. Patrons may have been guided by biblical strictures on the purification of metals and sought inspiration as much from the covers of books in their libraries as from their contents. Building projects brought together northern masons and Andalusí sculptors. Such collaborations may have kindled achievements that went on to be labelled ‘Romanesque art’.

Why does this book end with the death of Alfonso VI, before the production of so many great works of Romanesque art in Spain and Portugal? The answer lies in a change of

narrative in the first decades of the twelfth century, in a fundamental alteration to the rhythms of communication and artistic exchange. Not only did Alfonso VI die in 1109, but the taifa kingdom of Zaragoza also fell to the Almoravids in 1110. Relationships between the north and south of the peninsula now involved less overt exchange. From the eighth to the eleventh centuries, diplomacy and negotiation had worked even between unequal parties, but during the twelfth century, old agreements no longer applied, and warfare was more pervasive. When the papal legates arrived in the later eleventh century, travelling the routes more often identified as pilgrimage roads, they reinforced changes in the axis of the peninsula, strengthening earlier more fragile east-west links. Their networks infiltrated those of local elites, forming a new matrix of obligations that connected monarchs and churchmen to the papacy and to powerful abbeys north of the Pyrenees. They could operate above internal politics, influence artistic decisions, and move craftsmen between sites. The implications of their agency during the twelfth century are considerable, but further analysis of this requires a future project.

Looking south, the wealth of the taifa kingdoms passed to the Almoravids, whose centre of interest remained the Maghrib.¹ Likewise, quantities of gold and ivory from Africa no longer reached the Christian kingdoms, but were diverted to the cities of the Maghrebi dynasty. The same rulers probably acquired craftsmen from al-Andalus, although the only evidence for this is the minbar, or pulpit, of the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakesh, which was made in Córdoba c. 1137 for the last Almoravid sultan. In the north, Queen Urraca of León and Castile had to spend time and resources protecting the integrity of her kingdom against her

1 Ettahir, 2014: 142–49 and 191–95.

ex-husband, Alfonso I, ‘the battler’, of Aragón, and against Portugal under her half-sister, Teresa. Meanwhile, using his ecclesiastical network, Archbishop Gelmírez developed Santiago de Compostela as a profitable pilgrimage destination, but with the increased numbers of foreign pilgrims came the myth of Charlemagne’s conquest of the peninsula. Many innovations in Romanesque art now took place on the other side of the Pyrenees, where craftsmen may have followed powerful patrons with papal connections. Above all, religious difference began to be the most important way of defining people and territories. By incorporating a miscellany of misconceptions, the quotation from the twelfth-century *Historia Caroli Magni*, often known as the *Pseudo-Turpin*, encapsulates this change:

The Saracens say that Muhammad – whom they all adore – personally sculpted this idol during his life as an image of himself and that, with his magic arts, he hid within it a legion of demons that possess it with great energy. No

one has ever been able to destroy it, and all Christians who approach immediately become sick. However, any Saracen who comes near to adore or to pray to Muhammad leaves completely healthy (*Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin*, chapter 4).²

This description is a distorted account of a gilded brass statue – perhaps of Neptune or Hercules – that stood on a tower marking the entrance to the harbour of Cádiz. In this false chronicle of Charlemagne, the statue is reinvented as an example of Islamic idolatry and as a site of dangerous magic. Classical art, which had been a shared, albeit contested, language across the peninsula, was now the focus of fear, insult, and blasphemy. Over the twelfth century, the peninsula no longer functioned as an entity with close communication and exchange between different regions and their rulers. The primary artistic conversation in the north was now directed across the Pyrenees, and that in the south, across the Straits of Gibraltar.

2 *Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin*, 2014, 14.

Chronology 700-1100

	Al-Andalus	Links	Christian kingdoms
700-750	Arabs and Berbers invade the peninsula 711-713 Umayyad governor reconstructs Roman walls and bridge at Córdoba – 720	Replacement of Visigothic regime	Legendary figures: Pelayo, Fruela, Alfonso I (r.739-757)
750-800	Umayyad 'Abd al-Rahmān I arrives from Damascus via N Africa – 756 'Abd al-Rahmān I begins work on the Great Mosque of Córdoba – 784		Silo (r. 774-783) m. Adosinda Beatus of Liébana c.730-c.800
800-850	'Abd al-Rahmān II (822-852)	844: Defeat of Vikings by Ramiro I	Alfonso II (r. 791-842) Ramiro I (r. 842-850)
850-900	Muhammad (r.852-886) 'Abd Allah (r.888-912)	Christian women giving sons to Emirs: Qalam; Ailo and Durr, a.k.a Oñega, widow of Aznar Sánchez	Ordoño I (r. 850-866) Alfonso III (r.866-910) m. Jimena of Navarre
900-960	'Abd al-Rahmān III (r.912-961) Caliph from 929; foundation of Madīnat al-Zahrā – 936	'Abd al-Rahmān III has a Christian slave mother, Muzna 924: meeting with Queen Tota of Navarre 941: envoys to León led by Hashdai al-Shaprut after the battle of Simancas 942: treaty with Barcelona 945-961: envoys from Constantinople; tributary visits from León 953: son of Count of Barcelona as hostage	Ordoño II (r. 914-924) m. Elvira Menéndez Ramiro II (r. 931-951) m. (i) Adosinda Gutiérrez, cousin of Bishop Rosendo; (ii) Urraca of Navarre Ordoño III (r.951-956) Sancho the Fat (r. 955-956 & 960-967)

	Al-Andalus	Links	Christian kingdoms
960-1009	al-Hakam II (r.961-976) al-Hisham,(r.976-1013) viziers: al-Mansur d.1002 and 'Abd al-Malik d.1008	Subh from Navarre gives the Caliph a son 972: envoys from Constantinople 974: tributary visit from Barcelona 983: al-Mansur (m) daughter of king of Navarre 993 Teresa Vermúdez (?)	Ramiro III (r.966-985) Scribe Maius d. 968 Bishop Rosendo d. 977 Sancho Garcés II of Navarre (r.970-994) Vermudo II (r.985-999)
1010-1050	Fitna; sack of Madīnat al-Zahrā: 1009, and emergence of multiple taifa kingdoms Official end of the Caliphate: 1030/1	1010 & 1018: Catalan and Castilian forces support opposing factions in Córdoba	Alfonso V (r.999-1027) of León Sancho III of Navarre (r.1004-1035) m. Munia of Castile Abbot-bishop Oliba f.1008-1046 Vermudo III (r.1027-1037) m. Jimena of Castile; sister Sancha
1050-1100	Established taifa kingdoms including Toledo; Seville; Zaragoza; Badajoz; Denia Almoravids capture Seville; al-Mutamid exiled to Morocco – 1091	Paria payments c. 1091: Zaida, daughter-in-law of the ruler of Seville, gives Alfonso VI an heir	Fernando I of Castile (1037-1065) m. Sancha of León 1085: Alfonso VI takes over the taifa kingdom of Toledo; al-Qadir exiled to Valencia

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